GOLIATH'S APPRENTICE

THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE PACIFIC WAR 1941-1945

New Zealand has made, is making, and will continue to make a very vital effort to participate in the South Pacific War. Their willingness to participate has won for them a very friendly feeling in Washington with our high military and naval authorities.

(Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to Admiral William F. Halsey, 3 April 1943)

BRIAN J. HEWSON

For my first teacher,
Brian Patrick Hewson.

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Introduction

The official history of the Royal New Zealand Air Force estimates that of the 55,000 New Zealanders who joined the air force during the Second World War, nearly 15,000 served in the Pacific theatre at some time.[1] Rather than try to retell the tactical or operational history of this campaign, this study attempts instead to provide a much-needed political, diplomatic and command background to RNZAF operations in the Pacific. This is done through an examination of New Zealand service and government department archives, and relevant Australian records. For the first time, a thorough examination has also been made of United States archives to explore American opinion of New Zealand's effort in the Pacific. Answers will be sought as to why New Zealand felt the need to form such a relatively large air force for service in the Pacific and whether or not this was an appropriate or even successful course of action for the country to take. Strategic objectives should, after all, be the essence of national military contributions and as far as these are known or may be discovered by the historian, offer a useful mechanism by which a particular effort or campaign may be studied, interpreted or evaluated.

In April 1943, Air Commodore Arthur Nevill wrote to the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt, that he was concerned about the RNZAF's lack of attention to its war records. It appeared to Nevill "a standing disgrace" that while New Zealand's 2 Division had had a war archives section for some years, the RNZAF had no similar organisation.

> It is a fact, of course, [wrote Nevill] that certain records are preserved by the Air Ministry, but we want copies of these ourselves, and we want to elaborate them. No official history can ultimately be produced unless this work is commenced now and we have already lost three years. Furthermore, there are many other activities, such as the collection of

[1] J.M.S. Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45*, Wellington, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1955, p. vii. For exact figures on RNZAF personnel, casualties, awards and operational statistics, see "Air Department Report for the Year 1945-1946" in *Appendix to the Journals of the New Zealand House of Representatives (AJHR)* 1946 H-37, pp. 5-6, 14-18.

> material for War Museums, on which the Canadians and Australians are most active. We are doing nothing.[2]

Early in 1944, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff recommended that steps be taken to commence the compilation of a war history for each of the three branches of the armed forces. The Army was well under way in both the Middle East and in the Pacific, and the Royal New Zealand Navy was maintaining records of all its forces in New Zealand and the Pacific, but the RNZAF as yet had "no war archives organisation nor [had] any arrangements been made to cover the activities of New Zealand personnel serving in the Royal Navy or the RAF".[3] When collection did start, the work of the archivists was difficult:

> Pacific Island material was poor and scattered and gathering it was not easy. The Air Department itself, under the pressure of war conditions, had not managed its records well and important documents were misplaced or destroyed.... The records taken over by the archives section were no more than miscellaneous fragments. Squadrons, both in New Zealand and in the Pacific, do not appear to have had much interest in keeping their records. Early ones were almost non-existent, later ones were sparse.[4]

The introduction to the Air Department files at the New Zealand National Archives in Wellington agrees that the RNZAF was slow to take an interest in its historical records or to arrange for their collection and organisation. This, the archivist speculates, was possibly because the air force was so newly established and looked to the future rather than the past. Alternatively, it is suggested that this could have been because the air force lacked the degree of operational control that the army possessed in the Middle East: "2 Division could easily identify its achievements at Alamein or Casino, whereas No. 1 (Islands) Group squadrons operated too closely with the United States air forces to have a sense of independent involvement against the Japanese".[5]

In contrast, when senior officers were asked to comment on early drafts of Squadron Leader John Ross's history, the Director of Organisation and Staff Duties,

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[2] Nevill to Isitt, 13 April 1943, National Archives of New Zealand, Wellington (hereafter NANZ), Air 100/3.
[3] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 187 "Official War History", 5 January 1944, NANZ WAII 21/6b.
[4] Introduction to Air Department Files, NANZ.
[5] ibid.

Wing Commander Cameron Turner, wrote that to his mind the air force should lose no opportunity to tell "with accuracy and colour the story of our largest deployment of forces in the late war". While the story of operations in the European theatre would be a stirring one, "there is not much of it which is peculiarly our own in quite the same intimate way that the Solomons story is part of us". This was even more so because New Zealand provided complete units in the field including ground staff. The Solomons area, Turner argued, "was the only area where we had our Servicing Units in the front line and we should make the most of it, if only for their sakes alone".[6]

Compared to the shelves of volumes eventually produced by the New Zealand War History Branch on other campaigns in which New Zealanders served, Ross's *Royal New Zealand Air Force* is rather modest. Published in 1955, it covers in a single volume the birth of military aviation in New Zealand before the First World War, its development between the wars, the official establishment of the RNZAF in 1937, the start of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, the air defence of New Zealand, the ill-fated air defence of South-East Asia, as well as New Zealand's involvement in the Pacific Theatre. Although Oxford-educated and widely respected, as a relatively junior air force officer writing immediately after the war, Ross could hardly have been expected to produce a critical evaluation, and the operational focus and nature of his history should not be surprising.

This study is meant to establish a background and context for the RNZAF's involvement in the Pacific Theatre and still leaves plenty more work to be done on any one of the other subjects briefly covered by Ross. The Air Department series in Wellington forms a large and varied collection of official documents and files and it is here that any further research would start. Included in the series are the original narratives of the war history branch, from which the official history was produced. These are often considerably more comprehensive and critical than the published history and form a valuable resource for researchers interested in particular aspects of the subject. Also essential are the extensive files of the old Prime Minister's

[6] Minute No. 54 to CAS (no date) "History of RNZAF in New Zealand and in Pacific", NANZ Air 1 12/15/1.

Department, now called External Affairs (EA), especially those relating to New Zealand's Pacific defence policy.

The collection held by the RNZAF Archives at the old Wigram air base in Christchurch consists of a small number of similar official files as well as a large quantity of personal log books, squadron operational record books, station newspapers, oral history recordings, maps and photographs. There is a small amount of material relating to RNZAF service with the Australian Army later in the war at the Australian War Memorial and the National Archives of Australia, both in Canberra, and a number of Australian historians have written extensively on the South-West Pacific campaigns. The United States Army, Navy and State Department collections at the American National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at College Park, Maryland, are vast and also offer plenty of interesting material on New Zealand-American relations generally during this period. There is almost certainly more important material yet to be found in these collections. Also important are the smaller collections at the United States Navy History Center and the manuscripts division of the Library of Congress, both in Washington DC.

Other likely sources include the Australian and New Zealand official histories, and the detailed histories produced by different branches of the American forces. There is a huge literature on various aspects of the Pacific war along with a number of very good general histories. Finally, there are many lively accounts written by ex-servicemen such as Keith Mulligan, Bob Spurdle, Alex Horn, and Bryan Cox, of their experiences in the RNZAF during the Pacific War.

It can be argued that the Pacific region is, and was during the Second World War, the most strategically important theatre for the defence of New Zealand. Yet at the time, most New Zealanders' attention was understandably focused on the European War and the exploits of 2 Division in the Middle East. It was the defence of Great Britain's power and the Commonwealth as a whole that was New Zealand's greatest concern. An awareness of the Pacific as strategically important came either late or not at all for most New Zealanders. However, New Zealand wanted to take part in the conflict against Japan even after the situation was taken safely in hand by the United States. National pride necessitated some participation and in addition to 3 Division and the Royal New Zealand Navy, the RNZAF's role in the defence of the

South and South-West Pacific was a recognisably national contribution to the Allied effort against Japan. In addition there was continued criticism from Australia that New Zealand was not pulling its weight in the defence of the region. Most importantly, perhaps, was the need for New Zealand to show a "British" flag during these campaigns. This was done with an eye towards the expected post-war settlement and to resist the almost inevitable tendency of the Pacific to become an American lake.

At the start of the South Pacific offensive in August 1942, the United States was desperate for aircraft and pilots. Air Commodore Victor Goddard, Chief of Air Staff at that time, was keen for the RNZAF to take an active role, but the government resisted denuding New Zealand of modern aircraft and squadrons. There was a fear in New Zealand both of leaving the country open to attack and of walking into a "second Crete" in the Pacific. At the same time, American commanders did not want RNZAF squadrons to be established and supplied with aircraft at the expense of American squadrons. Despite the blame usually attributed to the Canberra Agreement of January 1944, it is also clear that American commanders assumed very early in the war for various reasons, including American prestige and the apparent reluctance of the New Zealand government, that the New Zealand army and air forces would be employed in garrison or light combat roles.

It is another commonplace that with the fall of Singapore in February 1942, New Zealand inevitably and automatically turned to the United States. While New Zealand did look to establishing diplomatic and political contact with the United States, and to participating in command systems within the South Pacific and later South-West Pacific Areas, the pre-war resistance to American dominance in the Pacific remained. It was continually emphasised that New Zealand must play its part in the Pacific war to increase the strength of the "British" voice in the post-war negotiations that it was presumed would follow the defeat of Japan. Throughout the war, the New Zealand Army maintained its commitment to the Middle East and Mediterranean campaigns while New Zealand was very well represented by its air personnel in Britain.

On several occasions, especially towards the end of the war, the RNZAF looked towards Britain for better opportunities, whether they be under the South-East

Asia Command, with the Royal Navy, or the Australians, and plans were being made when the war ended for service with a British Commonwealth force against Japan itself. How appropriate was it, then, for Goddard and Isitt to press for the development of the RNZAF in the Pacific as a separate force competing with the army as well as local industry and agriculture? After so much national effort was put into developing a relatively large force, the disappointment was great when it was stranded in less active areas later in the war. Possibly the two commanders merely hoped that the newly-formed RNZAF, as opposed to New Zealanders in the RAF, would be able to prove itself against the excellent records of the army and the much smaller navy. But were they misguided by the Americans or should accusations of empire-building be laid against them?

The end of the Second World War saw New Zealand concentrating again on trade and defence ties with Britain while remaining at the same time actively involved in the United Nations and in the gradual emergence of a western anti-communist alliance. The primary objective of defeating the enemy and making the South Pacific secure again was achieved. Yet it remains to be seen whether or not New Zealand gained suitable post-war recognition for its contribution in the Pacific or whether it might have been better to have used that manpower and material for agricultural development and production in New Zealand, or even alternatively to have focused completely on Europe.

Was New Zealand successful along with Australia in gaining a voice in South Pacific affairs as was hoped and, furthermore, how successful was New Zealand's first experience of working closely with the United States and Australia as opposed to its traditional ally, Great Britain? Did the experience warn New Zealand of the dangers of straying too far from the Commonwealth family or was it a successful, or at least educational, precursor to ANZUS co-operation after the war? New Zealand's experience was unique not only because it was, as it generally expected to be, the very junior partner to the United States, but also because for reasons of geography and national politics, the South-West Pacific, where much of the RNZAF's action took place, represented (and still represents today) a much more important theatre to Australians than to New Zealanders.

Chapter One

The Defence Of New Zealand

A British scheme that does not defend New Zealand is worthless to us.
(John A. Lee, May 1936)

From the earliest days of European settlement in New Zealand, the armed forces of the British Empire, principally the Royal Navy, were looked to by the tiny settler population as the obvious source of protection against any external threat. In addition, any armed forces raised within New Zealand were designed to be useful not only for local defence but as a possible contribution to imperial defence. French and Russian naval expansion threatened British naval superiority on several occasions during the nineteenth century and from about 1885 fear of Russian attack was frequently voiced in New Zealand. Harbour defences were begun after these Russian scares and in 1900 New Zealand's first contingent set sail to help the "Mother Country" against the "rebellious" Boers in South Africa.

Imperial defence was a means of assisting towards the continuing pre-eminence of the British Empire and therefore the lasting strength of New Zealand's protection. This theme continued and was further developed during the First World War and throughout the interwar years. While local forces would be used to protect vital strategic points such as the harbours at Auckland, Wellington and Lyttelton, the fact remained that New Zealand stood or fell with Britain and the empire and its three services were designed to fulfil an imperial defence role. In the build-up to the Second World War, there was also an increasing awareness of the strategic significance of the arc of Pacific islands to the north of New Zealand as well as the growth of the concept of an air force for the defence of New Zealand. The development of these two ideas, combined with the older notions of security within the British Empire, would become central to discussions about what role, if any, New Zealand should take in the event of war in the Pacific against Japan.

From the late nineteenth century onwards, New Zealand governments, especially under Premiers George Grey, Julius Vogel and Richard Seddon, had continually urged a reluctant Britain to accept greater responsibility in the Pacific

Ocean. Seddon argued that the Pacific Island question was of "paramount importance" and that "whenever possible, the British flag should float over the islands of the Pacific."[1] From this time onwards there was, according to New Zealand historian Ian McGibbon, an "element of tension" between the Admiralty wishing to concentrate its force and colonial opinion wanting some locally visible means of defence. During the First World War, New Zealand became increasingly aware of the growing strategic importance of the Pacific. The New Zealand force that ventured out to secure Western Samoa, the first German territory to be captured during the war, was threatened by cruisers from the German Eastern Asiatic Squadron. Under Vice-Admiral Count von Spee, this powerful squadron consisted of two modern armoured cruisers, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, two light cruisers, *Emden* and *Nürnberg,* and two other auxiliary cruisers, and operated in the Pacific until it was destroyed at the Battle of the Falkland Islands in December 1914. For his own reasons Spee chose not to attack Western Samoa, but New Zealand was well aware of how defenceless it would really have been. The squadron's threat left the New Zealand government determined that in future there should be better planning and provision for imperial defence in the Pacific region.[2] Nevertheless, during 1917, several vessels were sunk in New Zealand waters by mines laid by the German cruiser *Wolf.* Continuing concern over New Zealand's coastal defence led the government to approach the Secretary of State for Colonies in June 1918 about the purchase of three seaplanes and several naval vessels for coastal patrols. At the time, these were said to be needed in British waters so instead the British Air Ministry offered to send a senior officer to New Zealand after the war to report on the country's future air requirements.[3]

To the side possessing predominance in the air, an incalculable advantage will accrue.

(Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Vere Bettington, June 1919)

In March 1919, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Vere Bettington arrived in New Zealand. In his report of 5 June, Bettington was pessimistic about the durability of

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[1] A. Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964, pp. 245-246.

[2] I. C. McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-1942*, Wellington, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1981, pp. 8, 19, 27-30.

any peace based on the League of Nations. He also argued that even though it was still in its infancy, air power would revolutionise modern warfare:

> with the present types of machines, in large numbers, undefended cities could be made untenable in a single day or night, industries paralysed, railway lines severed at vital points, docks and shipping destroyed. Future wars will probably commence with fierce air fights, and to the side possessing predominance in the air, an incalculable advantage will accrue.[4]

Bettington maintained that New Zealand could no longer depend on its isolation for protection because "the centre of the world's unrest" was moving from Europe to the Pacific. Even though a wartime ally, Japan was identified as a likely enemy in the future. The Japanese, he warned, had profited greatly from the last war and were "a very progressive, economical, hardworking, industrious and clever people" who would soon be seeking outlets for their surplus population as well as markets for their goods. In any future conflict, New Zealand's security would depend on the strength of the British Empire but, because of its isolation, New Zealand must build up enough local forces, especially in the air, to protect itself until reinforcements arrived. "Aerial warfare in the future", Bettington warned, "may be so rapidly commenced, and decisive results so quickly obtained, that every portion of the empire should be in a state of readiness to repel an attack or render mutual assistance." New Zealand's coastline made it particularly difficult to defend and its distance from the Mother Country was so great that "considerable time must elapse before assistance could be expected from that quarter." New Zealand's air forces should be geared to army and naval co-operation as well as a "distinct striking force". It should maintain the closest liaison and co-ordination possible with Australia and Britain, while its airmen should train and serve with the Royal Air Force.[5]

Bettington was expecting the government to create an air force and even before his report was released had written to the Minister of Defence, Sir James Allen, suggesting the recruitment of ex-RAF mechanics and pilots already in New Zealand, "before they have drifted off and become established in civil life", and the

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[3] W. D. McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War: Defence Policy 1919-1939*, Christchurch, University of Canterbury Press, 1988, pp. 27-28.
[4] Bettington Report, 5 June 1919 p. 2, NANZ Air 1 102/3/1.
[5] ibid., pp. 1-5, 20.

appointment of a Liaison Officer at the Air Ministry in London.[6] The two private flying schools at Sockburn, near Christchurch, and Kohimarama on Auckland harbour, should be taken over by the government, air bases should be established in the four main centres with smaller fields around the country. Even though there was only a handful of aircraft in New Zealand, he advocated a force of seven squadrons including two fighter squadrons, two bomber squadrons and two flying-boat squadrons. Bettington estimated that the total cost of this build-up would be £300,000 per year for eight years. Worth about $20 million per year in today's terms, this was a huge sum for such a small country. At the same time, Britain announced that it would assist in the creation of any Dominion air force by donating 100 aircraft. Bettington was asked by the New Zealand government to submit less expensive proposals, but returned to Britain before any final decision on either the British aircraft offer or the establishment of an air force was made.[7]

It is almost inevitable that the interests of Japan and the British Empire will eventually clash.

(Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe, August 1919)

The most influential report of the year came from Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe who arrived from Britain in August 1919 to report on the naval defence of New Zealand, as part of an empire-wide mission. Like Bettington, Jellicoe saw the Pacific as an area of potential conflict and highlighted the growing strategic significance of the Pacific islands, especially Fiji, to New Zealand. He also pinpointed Japan as a potential enemy. Japan, he said, was "the only nation in the Far East, except the United States, which would be in a position to inflict any permanent damage on the British Empire." Although Japan was still a treaty ally of Britain, he maintained that "it would be very unwise to trust solely in this alliance". Noting friction with China, and Japanese resentment at immigration policies which excluded Asians from the Dominions, he concluded that it was "almost inevitable that the interests of Japan and the British Empire will eventually clash." Jellicoe emphasised the importance of the Pacific islands to New Zealand's defence, in particular Fiji and

[6] Bettington to Sir James Allen, 5 June 1919, NANZ Air 1 102/3/1.
[7] McIntyre, pp. 29, 56-59. Price conversion is made using New Zealand Statistics Department consumer price index, *New Zealand Official Year Book 1998*, pp. 546-547.

Tonga. He saw the naval needs of the area as the protection of sea lanes and the maintenance of sea supremacy. These two objectives would best be achieved if the costs were shared between Britain and the Dominions which would contribute according to their population and resources. New Zealand, for example, could pay for a portion of the British Far East Fleet (assessed at three light cruisers, six submarines and a depot ship) as well as providing for its own harbour defences. Although primarily interested in imperial naval policy, Jellicoe also made some mention of air power. As well as being useful to the army, air units were "an integral part of any fleet" and he therefore suggested a nucleus of five flying-boats to be stationed at Auckland as part of the RAF and even a light aircraft carrier and a squadron of torpedo bombers might be added later.[8]

The government set up a committee under Major-General Alfred Robin to advise on the implementation of the Jellicoe report and whether to accept the 100 aircraft offered by Britain. The committee's report recognised the Royal Navy as New Zealand's first line of defence. It also accepted that some form of air defence was necessary although due to their expense and the rapidity with which military machines became obsolete, civil rather than military aviation should be encouraged. Pilots could become proficient on civil aircraft and the latest military planes ordered when necessary. The committee recommended that a small permanent staff be established while the rest of the service would be part of the Territorial Force and become the Aviation Corps of the army.[9] On 28 January 1920, the government finally requested 29 training aircraft and six flying-boats from Britain, of which it received only the trainers. Major-General Sir E. W. Chaytor, the General Officer Commanding, considered that "for some time to come aviation should in this country be developed on civil rather than military lines, and that provision be made for its expansion for military requirements in a national emergency." Provision was begun to house the new aircraft at Sockburn near Christchurch, and an Air Board was created to

[8] *AJHR* 1919 A-4. On Japanese migration see N. Bennett "Bitter Fruit: Japanese Migration and Anglo-Saxon Obstacles, 1890-1924" in *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Fourth Series, Vol 8, 1993, pp. 67-83.

[9] McIntyre, pp. 60-61.

advise the government on matters of defence, commercial undertakings and aviation generally. [10]

Early in 1921, Sir Henry Wigram, who had long campaigned for the development of aviation in New Zealand, submitted a paper to the Chiefs of Staff entitled "The Use of Aircraft in the Defence of New Zealand". Wigram argued that although the British Fleet would deter any enemy fleet, New Zealand could still be threatened by raiders who would almost certainly bring aircraft with them. These aircraft could only be discouraged by fighter aircraft defending New Zealand. Air defence would be economical and from bases in the centre of each island, scouting planes could prevent surprise attack and cover almost all of New Zealand's coastline and main cities. Air power, he said, offered New Zealand "possibilities for defence which are not shared by any other country." In 1923, Wigram offered the government £10,000 towards the cost of purchasing the Canterbury Aviation Company's aerodrome at Sockburn. Despite receiving a government subsidy, the company had been losing money since the war. Nevertheless Colonel Chaffey, a director of the company, told Prime Minister William Massey that he was sure flying was going to be "the first line of defence and offence of the future. As time goes on, we will have to be more and more independent. We cannot rely on the old country for ever.... Aviation is a most economical way of producing a most efficient line of defence and offence." The government accepted Wigram's offer and on 21 June, the base which would later be named after him, was taken over by the army. A year later, Hobsonville, north of Auckland, was chosen as another site for the development of New Zealand's air defence.[11]

The pivot of Imperial Defence in the Far East upon which the security of the whole Empire in the Eastern-Hemisphere depends.

(British Chiefs of Staff, March 1931)

Both Admiral Jellicoe and Colonel Bettington had pointed to Japan as the most likely danger to the British Empire in the Pacific, even though Japan and Britain had been treaty allies since 1902. In 1911, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was renewed for ten years and during the First World War, with the Royal Navy concentrated in

[10] *AJHR* 1920, H-19.
[11] McIntyre, pp. 62-63.

home waters, the protection of British interests in East Asia had depended upon support from Japan. Indeed, the Imperial Japanese Navy had escorted Australian and New Zealand forces to the Mediterranean and even served there. By 1921, the question of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was again raised because the agreement was due for renewal, and also for modification to make it consistent with the covenant of the League of Nations. Friendship with Japan was highly important for Britain which would otherwise be in a vulnerable position in the Far East, and was reluctant to humiliate Japan by refusing to renew the alliance. However, the alliance was unpopular in the United States. For Britain, an agreement between the three nations would be the ideal or, failing that, a conference on the Pacific of all interested nations. Both Australia and New Zealand were in favour of renewal.[12]

At the Imperial Conference in June 1921, Lord Balfour, head of the Committee of Imperial Defence, presented the arguments for renewal and also revealed for the first time Britain's decision to build a naval base at Singapore. The British Naval Staff in Whitehall had identified Japan as a potential future enemy and decided that the most cost-efficient means of protecting the British Empire in the Far East was to build up a strong base to which the main fleet could be sent in case of conflict in the Pacific.[13] Unfortunately, Balfour admitted that it might take some time to build this base so, in the meantime, the alliance with Japan was in the empire's best interests and should be renewed. Australia and New Zealand were still very much in favour of renewing the treaty. The Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, said that if given the choice Australians would prefer the protection of the United States, but because it was thought unlikely that the United States would give such assurances then the British Empire must not alienate Japan. "Look at the map", he said, "and ask yourselves what would have happened to that great splash of red right down from India through Australia down to New Zealand, but for the Anglo-Japanese Treaty." For New Zealand, Massey said that he favoured renewal of the alliance, but also a conference with the Americans. Although pessimistic about American-Japanese

[12] ibid., p. 35.
[13] W. D. McIntyre, *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base*, London, Macmillan, 1979, pp. 29-30.

relations, he saw no need to turn Japan "from a loyal friend into a very dangerous antagonist."[14]

A decision on the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was postponed by the Imperial Conference when, on 11 July, United States President Warren Harding called for a conference on naval limitation and Pacific affairs in Washington. In December 1921, the "Pacific Treaty" was signed. This effectively ended the Anglo-Japanese alliance and replaced it with an agreement by Japan, the United States, Britain and France to respect each other's "insular possessions and insular dominions" in the Pacific, and to "communicate with one another fully and frankly" if threatened by another power.[15] In February 1922, the danger of an expensive naval race seemed to have been avoided when a treaty for the "limitation of naval armament" was signed in which the ratio of 10:10:6 was accepted. Britain accepted naval equality with the United States, while Japan agreed to a figure of 60 per cent of United States naval strength. Initially, this applied only to capital ships, but attempts would be made later to apply it in principle to other vessels. To make the agreement more acceptable to Japan, a status quo regarding fortifications and naval bases in the Pacific was agreed to which together with the limitations on capital ship strength seemed to provide a stable balance of power in the Pacific. In theory, neither the United States nor the British Empire could wage war successfully against Japan in the North-west Pacific because of their lack of bases in the area while they in turn could rely on the inferiority of the Japanese fleet to prevent an attack upon their possessions elsewhere.[16] Unfortunately, Japan bitterly resented the treaty and, as New Zealand had feared, relations between Japan and the other countries deteriorated rapidly from this time on.

In discussions about the proposed Singapore naval base at the 1923 Imperial Conference, Leopold Amery, First Lord of the Admiralty, advised that "if there were a European combination against us at the same moment as war was declared against us by Japan, we should be in a position of extraordinary difficulty", but if Singapore could hold out for a few months it "might be a strong inducement to a power like the United States to come in quickly and go and help." Despite this perceptive and vital

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[14] McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, pp. 37-38.
[15] Report of New Zealand's representative, Sir John Salmond, AJHR 1922 A-5, for a brief overview see also R. J. Maddox, *The United States and World War II*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1992, pp. 17-20.
[16] McGibbon, pp. 89-90.

insight at such an early stage in the development of the Singapore strategy, Australia and New Zealand were becoming increasingly concerned at growing Japanese naval strength and were anxious to see a strong base established there. Much of New Zealand's defence thinking had hitherto been based on the security provided by the country's isolation. However, the development of Japanese and American naval strength and, particularly, the growth and increased range of air power were giving a new strategic importance to the Pacific islands and making the protection of islands such as Fiji vital for New Zealand's local defence, as well as a contribution to imperial defence. In 1929, the New Zealand government received a paper from the British Committee for Imperial Defence on forces in the Pacific and the need to protect imperial cable stations at Fiji, Fanning Island and Norfolk Island. New Zealand was requested to protect Fanning Island and the cabinet agreed later in 1930 to two infantry platoons being sent when requested or on threat of war.[17]

Japan's supremacy in the western Pacific was again confirmed at the London Naval Conference (21 January to 22 April 1930) when agreement was sought on cruiser strength along the lines of the ratios established at the Washington Conference. At an Imperial Conference in London in October 1930, the New Zealand Prime Minister George Forbes stated that he doubted the strength of the League of Nations or Japanese goodwill and thought the whole Pacific Ocean would be "practically defenceless" without Singapore, even though the base was still far from complete. New Zealand's defence policy, he said, was now based on "the Fleet and Singapore".[18] In March 1931, the British Chiefs of Staff prepared a paper for the New Zealand government entitled "Imperial Defence as Affecting New Zealand". In this paper they set out Britain's strategic priorities which were firstly, the protection of Britain itself, followed by Britain's European commitments made through the League of Nations and the Locarno Pact: the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee signed by Britain, France, Belgium, Italy and Germany on 1 December 1925 to guarantee the Franco-German and Franco-Belgian borders. Outside Europe and the Mediterranean, Britain was concerned with four main areas: the Near East (Egypt, Suez and Palestine): the Middle East (especially the Persian oil fields); India, and finally the Far East and

[17] McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War,* pp. 78-79.
[18] ibid., p. 96.

Pacific area. The Chiefs argued that New Zealand could best help defend itself by aiding in the completion of the Singapore naval base and by sending army and air units to assist in its defence. Singapore was the key to the Far East and Pacific and New Zealand would not be threatened by Japan as long as the base was fully defended. "Provided that the British Fleet arrives in time, and finds a properly equipped base at Singapore", they argued:

> New Zealand has nothing to fear beyond sporadic attack. If, for any reason, the main fleet is unable to reach Singapore, or if the base is captured or seriously damaged by naval or aerial bombardment before its arrival, then New Zealand interests become exposed to attack on a considerable scale. Singapore, then, is the pivot of Imperial Defence in the Far East, upon which the security of the whole Empire in the Eastern-Hemisphere depends.[19]

This, of course, was always supposing that the base was ever finished and subsequently "properly equipped".

The "Mukden Incident" on 18-19 September 1931, which triggered the Japanese takeover of Manchuria, followed by the "Shanghai Incident" during January 1932, in which Japanese troops stormed that city, were turning points in empire defence preparations. Tension rose still further after the Nazi Party came to power in Germany in January 1933. The British Chiefs of Staff Review for 1935 hinted for the first time at the possible Germany-Japan dilemma foreseen ten years before by Amery. "The minimum naval strategical requirement for security", the review stated, was:

> to send to the East, in an emergency, a fleet sufficient to provide "cover" against the Japanese Fleet ... have sufficient additional forces behind this shield for the protection of our territories and mercantile marine against Japanese attack; at the same time ... be able to retain in European waters a force sufficient to prevent the strongest European power from obtaining control of our vital home territorial areas.[20]

By now, this was clearly an impossible commitment for the Royal Navy alone, but New Zealand was aware that "in view of its remoteness and smallness of population,

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[19] Sinclair Burgess Report p. 2, quoting C.I.D. paper 358C "Imperial Defence as Affecting New Zealand", 11 March 1931, NANZ Air 1 102/1/1.
[20] McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War,* pp. 136-137.

self-interest alone should dictate the closest of association with the Empire". New Zealand was too small to stand alone. The primary principle of New Zealand defence, according to the Chiefs of Staff, was that "New Zealand stands or falls with the British Empire, and particularly with Great Britain". The main concerns were now the continued development of air power and the intentions of Japan. Possible enemy air power called for "special measures for the protection and maintenance of communications, and for defence against air attack". It was possible that the next generation might revolutionise this method of warfare so the closest attention had to be paid to these developments. As for Japan, although there was no reason to suspect the Japanese of hostile intent against the British Empire, it was now considered the only possible foe in the Pacific and there had recently been increased friction between the two powers.[21]

In a Review of Imperial Defence for the Imperial Conference in London in May 1937, British defence chiefs again warned that "the chief danger which Imperial Defence has to face at the moment is that we are in a position of having threats at both ends of the Empire from strong military powers, i.e., Germany and Japan, while in the centre we have lost our traditional security in the Mediterranean owing to the rise of an aggressive spirit in Italy accompanied by an increase in her military strength." In their Far East Appreciation the chiefs made it clear that if war broke out in the east while Britain was at war with Germany the timing and size of the fleet sent to Singapore could well depend on "conditions which have actually arisen".[22] New Zealand informed the conference that it attached the greatest importance to close co-operation in defence matters. The government was anxious to make sure that expenditure on its services was properly balanced, and laid out to enable the New Zealand forces to act as efficiently as possible in local defence of their country, and in Imperial Defence in co-operation with the forces of other members of the Commonwealth. In this connection great importance was attached to the Singapore base.[23]

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[21] New Zealand Committee of Imperial Defence: The Defence of New Zealand (Review by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee), March 1935, NANZ EA1 85/1/1-1.
[22] McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War,* pp. 159, 162.
[23] Report from 1937 Imperial Conference, NANZ EA1 85/1/1.

The Cinderella of the services.

(W. David McIntyre, 1988)

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, New Zealand's air force remained tiny. In the words of W. David McIntyre, "the infant air force remained very much the Cinderella of the services, in spite of the lip service paid to air defence."[24] The Permanent Air Force consisted of an administrative and training cadre of a handful of officers and other ranks, while the Territorial Air Force had about one hundred officers, occasionally attending refresher courses at Wigram. In September 1928, Air Marshal Sir John Salmond, head of the Air Defence of Great Britain, arrived for a month to report on the organisation of New Zealand's air defence. In his report of 17 October, he noted that the scale of possible air attack against New Zealand ports was practically nil, but on the other hand, sea-borne attack in the form of raids by cruisers, armed raiders, and submarines had to be taken into account. The defence of the Dominion against this form of attack would be dependent on local seaward defences, coastal defence guns and, especially, aircraft. Modern aircraft possessed the great mobility needed to overcome the widely-spread communities and natural obstacles of New Zealand, were capable of a variety of roles and would be most valuable as an offensive weapon against enemy raids. "The outstanding fact remains", Salmond argued, "that in aircraft we have a weapon only first introduced during the last war, but of such vast capacity for development that it must be a primary consideration in framing all future schemes of defence." Unfortunately, he noted, the Dominion was currently "lacking in Air Forces capable either of sustained co-operation with the Army or Navy, or of acting independently in defence". Salmond felt that the nature of air forces meant that the Territorial Force approach was inappropriate and recommended a full-time force based on army co-operation and training flights at Wigram, bomber and coastal reconnaissance flights at Hobsonville near Auckland, with another flight at Blenheim at the top of the South Island where there was suitable land available to develop a base to cover Wellington.[25]

The government accepted Salmond's report in principle, but financial considerations meant that little was done to implement it. A year later, another RAF

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[24] McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War,* p. 64.

[25] Salmond Report, NANZ Air 1 102/3/2, especially Part I pp. 6-7, Part II pp. 5-7.

officer, Wing Commander Stuart Grant-Dalton came to New Zealand as Director of Air Services. Grant-Dalton informed the government that the air force was totally incapable of army or navy co-operation or of independent action because there were so few operational aircraft and no formed units in the Territorial Air Force or the Permanent Air Force.[26] About this time, however, the government accepted an air commitment to imperial defence. Four squadrons would be made available within the first four months of war, two for army co-operation and two as bombers, as part of the New Zealand expeditionary force. The government also announced a nation-wide Territorial Air Scheme based on four squadrons throughout the country (again two army co-operation and two bombing).[27]

Early in 1933, the Director of Air Services, Squadron Leader Thomas Wilkes, received two reports which attacked the government's air policy. The first, by Flight Lieutenant Arthur Neville (a staff officer working for Wilkes) criticised the Territorial Air Force created by the government as unrealistic because it had no equipment and insufficient manpower. It would be better, he argued, to concentrate on a reconnaissance/bomber flight for naval co-operation based at Hobsonville, and the flight training school and an army co-operation flight at Wigram. The second report, by Flight Lieutenant Sidney Wallingford, declared that the Permanent Air Force as it existed then was "useless as an active force, and would be a hindrance if sent overseas in its present state." Wallingford believed that the Territorial Air Force gave a false impression of security to the general public and therefore should be abolished. He also argued that air force spending should be increased considerably and that new aircraft should be purchased to fit the three roles New Zealand's air force was supposed to fulfil: army and naval co-operation, and imperial defence.[28]

Wilkes did not have sufficient seniority to influence government thinking, but Major-General William Sinclair-Burgess (Chief of General Staff and Chairman of the New Zealand Committee for Imperial Defence) was aware of the problem and set up a committee to report on New Zealand's defence requirements. The committee's report, released in August 1933, reiterated New Zealand's dependence on the British Empire

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[26] Notes by Grant-Dalton, NANZ Air 1 102/3/3.
[27] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, p. 21.
[28] Nevill "The New Zealand Air Force" and Wallingford "Treatise on the Question of an Air Force for New Zealand", Both reports in NANZ Air 1 102/3/3.

and the Singapore strategy. New Zealand, it concluded, was "so small a country as to be by itself almost defenceless, and must therefore of necessity stand or fall with the Empire as a whole, and with Great Britain and Australia in particular."[29] New Zealand's security, the committee said, depended ultimately on "the success in the Pacific of the general scheme of Imperial Defence"; in other words, the Singapore strategy. The committee quoted the imperial conferences of 1923 and 1926 where it was agreed that each portion of the Empire should be responsible for its own local defence while the safeguarding of the maritime communications of the Empire, including the provision and protection of naval bases and the maintenance of a minimum standard of naval strength, was the responsibility of the Empire as a whole.[30]

New Zealand would have to provide for its own local defence for the "period before relief"; the period before the arrival of the main fleet, as well as be prepared to send an expeditionary force to assist Britain and also a force to help defend imperial lines of communication, such as a garrison at Singapore or Hong Kong. In addition to the purchase of artillery and anti-aircraft guns, New Zealand should obtain modern land and seaplanes for reconnaissance, anti-submarine patrols and convoy protection, as well as the defence of Auckland and Wellington and the "focal points" of trade in New Zealand waters (North Cape, Hauraki Gulf and Cook Strait). The New Zealand air force should consist of fully trained units for army co-operation, as well as fighters, torpedo-bombers and flying-boats.[31] Because of the demands of local defence and training and the "inherent difficulty and doubtful value" of sending complete air units overseas it was assumed that aircraft in the Dominion in peace would remain there in war. Instead, New Zealand would be better to concentrate on providing trained personnel for service overseas, although valuable experience might be gained through joint service with RAF peacetime garrison units in Singapore or Hong Kong. The government accepted only some of the committee's recommendations for the air force, which had been expected to cost approximately

[29] Report on Defence of New Zealand, 28 August 1933, NANZ Air 1 102/1/1; also AJHR, 1934-5 H-19.
[30] Report on Defence of New Zealand.
[31] ibid.

£400,000 over a six-year period; 16 new aircraft were ordered and work started on several new landing grounds.[32]

Too much of our present allocation is Imperial only in the sense that it has no great local advantage.

(John A. Lee, May 1936)

New Zealand's first Labour government took office on 6 December 1935. According to a later report, "the Air Force as then organised and equipped was incapable of any contribution towards local defence or defence of trade in local waters ... no steps had been taken to provide an efficient air force. Two air force stations only existed, one at Hobsonville and one at Wigram. Neither Station was adequately equipped; only 29 service machines of varying types were in New Zealand."[33] Frederick Jones was made Minister of Defence. Jones has been criticised as being unsuitable, especially as it was John A. Lee who took most interest in defence issues, yet the American Consul General, for example, found that Jones had the "faculty of avoiding controversies" and was therefore an influence for smoothing out the many difficulties that arose in his ministry.[34]

Other American officials would later note that, despite Jones being most affable and likeable, he had no previous experience or interest in defence matters. He had the reputation of having a good memory for administrative routine, but no creative ability or capacity for representing and popularising the defence forces within the country. Furthermore, the American government was warned that the New Zealand army, navy and air force officials who had to deal with Jones, held him in "very low esteem". Although firmly defended by the Prime Minister, much of the opposition's criticism of the government's conduct of the war would also later be focused on the ability of Jones as defence minister.[35]

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[32] Copy of report from Jones Papers, MS Papers 2183/1 Alexander Turnbull Collection, National Library, Wellington, appendix VI, p.3. The report recommended general purpose land aircraft such as the Vickers Vildebeeste as the first line of defence and Avro training aircraft for advanced training.
[33] "Air Force General" Jones Papers, M.S. Papers 2183/8 Alexander Turnbull Collection.
[34] L. C. Pinkerton to Secretary of State, 10 May 1940, United States National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter, NARA), College Park Maryland, R.G. 59 General Records of the Department of State: Decimal File 1940-1944, Box 5115, File 847H.00/82.
[35] Raymond E. Cox (American Consul General) to Secretary of State, 27 March 1942, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5115, File 847H.00/104.

While the election had been fought predominantly on domestic issues, the new government did have a definite set of attitudes which they brought to questions of foreign affairs. These have been described as:

> a firm belief in the concept of collective security through the League of Nations; a long-standing scepticism about the base of New Zealand's defence policy - the Singapore strategy; the feeling that technological change, especially the rapid development of aviation, had rendered previous planning out of date; a predilection for local defence.[36]

At first, Labour adopted a cautious approach to defence. Expenditure on defence was not an immediate priority, nevertheless plans were made to replace New Zealand's cruisers *Diomede* and *Dunedin* with the larger and more modern cruisers *Achilles* and *Leander*. "It was self evident the Dominion had to have some form of defence system," explained the Minister for Works, Robert Semple, and efficient air and naval forces were "the most important requirements".[37] At the same time, Labour also hoped that the League of Nations could be strengthened to become an effective means of security and enthusiastically accepted an invitation to make suggestions as to the strengthening of the League's covenant. If the Labour government's hopes lay with the League of Nations, it was also aware of the League's lack of effective strength and therefore followed a dual policy of continuing support for British Commonwealth defence arrangements as well.

Worried about the government's apparent hesitancy over defence issues, John A. Lee made an examination of the objectives of New Zealand's defence policy. Virtually usurping the Minister of Defence's role, Lee submitted a report to the government in January 1936 which called for the establishment of the Royal New Zealand Air Force as a separate armed service. In a second report he argued that the air force should be built up at the expense of the navy. "It can be said", he argued, "that the quantity and quality of our Naval Defence is due more to the policy of the British Government of the day than to the needs of local defence." Britain might be dependent on seapower, he argued, but New Zealand was not. In fact, New Zealand had no hostile neighbours and was so isolated that invasion was a "laughable prospect." Lee wondered whether a New Zealand expeditionary force could be moved

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[36] McGibbon, p. 256.

to where it was needed, or even if trade between Britain and New Zealand could continue, because of the shortage of naval protection in wartime and the threat from the air: "if modern war between so-called civilised powers is to become the stupendous killing of city populations from the air, the question of feeding populations six months after hostilities [begin] is not as great a defensive reality as is how much enemy population can be annihilated in a few hours."[38]

In his discussion of airpower, Lee was voicing the popular fear which had been voiced earlier by Bettington and was growing at that time throughout the world that aerial warfare would bring destruction and terror on a scale that would not actually be seen until the last year of the Second World War. He was also clearly expressing Labour's own ideological preferences for local defence compared to imperial and especially the idea of a strong air force which seemed to them to be more defensive, less imperialist and more cost efficient than naval vessels and could not be used as an anti-labour device as the army possibly could.[39] Lee forwarded a list of suggestions which formed the basis of cabinet discussions in May 1936. The first essential was New Zealand defence and subject to this the country should try and make its defence system part of a British scheme. However, Lee argued: "a British scheme that does not defend New Zealand is worthless to us". To Lee, the dispatch of an expeditionary force was not only "morally repugnant" but probably also "technically impossible" because of the problems involved in moving men and equipment in the face of hostile naval or air forces. New Zealand should, therefore, not be wasting huge sums of money preparing such a force.[40]

As for New Zealand's naval commitment, Lee's paper argued that Britain could probably be persuaded to supply aircraft rather than ships as long as the country maintained a good naval base and held suitable reserves of fuel and munitions. "Too much of our present allocation", Lee argued, "is Imperial only in the sense that it has no great local advantage". Instead, New Zealand should devote at least one-third of its defence vote to aviation and establish an air arm in separate contact with the

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[37] ibid.

[38] Lee "Report on Defence" cited in McGibbon, pp. 262-266.

[39] F. L. W. Wood, *The New Zealand People at War, Political and External Affairs: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45*, Wellington, War History branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1958, p. 23.

[40] Lee "Suggestions for Discussion" , cited in McGibbon pp. 265-266.

Minister. An attempt should be made, he suggested, to procure a regular supply of second-hand British planes at scrap rates. It was likely that this would earn the country a supply of obsolete biplanes, but Lee felt that even these were preferable to the occasional purchase of a few new machines. The technical advantages of this course would be such that Britain would be sure to co-operate willingly, especially if New Zealand agreed to make its reserve of pilots available during a crisis as long as this did not interfere with local defence. Finally, New Zealand should attempt to obtain "a young and thoroughly efficient officer" on loan from Britain to reorganise the country's air defences until local experience could be developed.[41]

While some of Lee's suggestions, such as his idea to develop a local iron and oil industry "with an eye to defence", were less successful, his paper clearly expressed the opinions of many in the Labour Party. In reply, Sinclair-Burgess argued that the defeat of Great Britain would "vitally imperil the Dominions, which, even if successful in their own local defence, would in all probability be lost eventually to the enemy." Conscious that there might be a delay in the arrival of the British fleet to the Far East, and that New Zealand might have to hold out for some time, he agreed that local defence should be improved, but argued that the primary objective should be "the preservation of the integrity of the Empire as a whole and not just the local defence of each component part". It was New Zealand's lack of strategic importance that would initially constrain a hostile power such as Japan rather than its isolation in the South Pacific.[42]

When the British government agreed to send out a "young and thoroughly efficient officer" to review the air defence of New Zealand, the cabinet decided to defer any final decision until Wing Commander Ralph Cochrane could make his report. Described as "short of stature, dapper, [and] rather humourless", Cochrane arrived in November 1936 with instructions from the British Chiefs of Staff to report decisively in favour of the existing Singapore policy and the New Zealand Naval Division as an important part of it. If anything, however, his work also seemed to reconfirm the New Zealand Government's views on air defence.[43] In his report, most

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[41] ibid.

[42] McGibbon, p. 266.

[43] Cochrane was to advise "on the purely air aspect of New Zealand defence ..." British Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 16 March 1937, NANZ EA1 85/1/1 pt. 1 p. 20. See also I. Driscoll, *Airline: The Making of a*

of which he actually wrote en route to New Zealand and released the following month, Cochrane confirmed that New Zealand's security depended on Singapore and the British fleet that would operate from there, and recommended that New Zealand develop a balanced defence provided by "the general naval dispositions, by air forces within range, and by the local forces and defences."[44] He prepared a programme to create a force of 24 modern "long-range multi-engined aircraft" capable of attacking enemy vessels located by aircraft reconnaissance or naval patrols, and capable of being sent to assist in the defence of Singapore in case of war. New Zealand's air force would have four main tasks:

> (i) the defence of New Zealand territory, including outlying islands and mandated territory, against sporadic raiders;
> (ii) the protection of New Zealand trade;
> (iii) the defence of the bases and lines of communication necessary for the operation of the Main British Forces in the Far East;
> (iv) the possible provision of air assistance for the defence of the United Kingdom and its communications.[45]

Cochrane argued that "all attack on New Zealand must be seaborne, while the risk of air attack was slight". He regarded the suggestion that Japan might send an aircraft carrier to raid New Zealand cities as exceedingly unlikely and this view was shared by the Royal Navy. Fighter and gun defence would be out of the question with the money available, so New Zealand should concentrate on providing an efficient force of bombers such as the Vickers Wellington twin-engined bombers, the latest and best bombers Britain had at that time. "Owing to the difficulties of long flights over the sea", Cochrane later recalled, "it was obvious that a regular force was necessary. The money available was limited and it was therefore necessary to provide a type of force which would be suitable for reconnaissance and as a striking force, and which would also have a range sufficient to reach Australia and the islands to the north of

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National Flag Carrier, Auckland, Shortland, 1979, pp. 21-22. Isitt described him as "an outstanding officer ... a hard task master and never said thank you"; interview with J. T. Henderson, December 1969, J. T. Henderson "The Defence of New Zealand: A Theoretical Approach to the Formulation and Substance of New Zealand Defence Policy 1935-1943", MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1971.

[44] "Report on the Air Aspect of the Defence Problems of New Zealand", December 1936, NANZ 1 102/4/1, Cochrane filled in the time during his voyage to New Zealand by reading *Gone With The Wind* and writing his report. F. Caird "The Strategic Significance of the Pacific Islands in New Zealand's Defence Policy 1935-1939" MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1987, pp. 40-45.

[45] British Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 16 March 1937, NANZ EA1 85/1/1 pt. 1 p. 2.

New Zealand." For these reasons, he selected the Wellington and, on the assumption that one flight of six would be able to tackle any surface raider up to an 8-inch gun cruiser, concluded that two squadrons of two flights should be sufficient protection. This would also allow one squadron to be detached overseas.[46]

The air force anticipated by Cochrane was designed, like New Zealand's army and navy, to fit within imperial defence schemes. At the same time, he also saw the Pacific islands as an essential element in the local defence of New Zealand territory. After the Air Ministry agreed that he would remain in New Zealand as the first Chief of Air Staff, Cochrane wrote to Carl Berendsen, Secretary of External Affairs and Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department, that the time had now come "to consider the place of the Pacific Islands in the general scheme of defence". While the importance of these islands was not thought to be in any way comparable to the importance of Singapore, a Japanese raid against New Zealand would "almost certainly come east of New Guinea". Cochrane envisaged a series of air routes across the Pacific, radiating out from Fiji and connected to both Singapore and to Australia and New Zealand, which could be used for air-reconnaissance, would act as a deterrent and "enable aircraft to be concentrated at very short notice on receipt of information". He also argued that once the expansion of the RNZAF was completed, it could be linked up with other air forces of the Empire stationed in the Western Pacific, and would be in a position to co-operate in any agreed scheme of mutual defence in this area. As an extension of the Singapore scheme, Cochrane felt that any expenditure, which would be relatively small, would be "fully justified." The Pacific Islands had considerable value in themselves and New Zealand should consider providing some form of defence for them. Berendsen apparently agreed, but felt it would be unwise to dissipate New Zealand's small strength.[47]

On 1 April 1937, the Air Force Act authorised the formation of the Royal New Zealand Air Force as a separate branch of the Dominion's defence forces. Its initial strength was 24 officers and 156 other ranks and an expansion programme was begun under Cochrane's direction. To provide a core of experienced officers, several RAF officers were sent to New Zealand and RNZAF officers were attached to the RAF.

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[46] Cochrane to Group Captain H. W. L. Saunders, 20 December 1938, NANZ Air 1 102/4/1.

Wigram air base, the first home of the New Zealand Permanent Air Force since 1923, was re-organised as a flying training school, a stores and repair base was set up at Hobsonville and the establishment of aerodromes at Whenuapai and Ohakea begun. These would accommodate the 30 Wellington bombers which were to be purchased by New Zealand over the next three years. Approval was also given to purchase 29 thoroughly obsolete Blackburn Baffin torpedo-bomber biplanes for use on coastal reconnaissance by the new Territorial Air Force which would be built up at the ports, starting at Wellington.[48]

The cabinet decided that despite British pleas for greater Dominion contributions to imperial defence, it would be "best to concentrate the whole of [New Zealand's] resources on an increased air force, leaving of course some subsidiary provision for naval and land forces."[49] The British Chiefs of Staff were naturally concerned at the direction in which New Zealand's defence thinking seemed to be moving and had already cabled Wellington in August 1936 to stress again the vital importance of British seapower and especially the Singapore strategy to New Zealand. Sir Maurice Hankey now warned that the policy of the New Zealand Government was "a very considerable change from previous arrangements for Imperial Defence".[50] New Zealand's proposals to develop local air defences at the expense of naval commitments rekindled the same debate which had been long-standing and sometimes bitter amongst the Chiefs of Staff themselves. Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Edward Ellington, Chief of the Air Staff, argued that New Zealand was too isolated to need to fear air attack, but against seaborne attack, aircraft would offer more effective defence than either ships or guns. No ship, he believed, would risk attack against an enemy's coast or ports if it was liable to counter-attack from the air.[51] Unfortunately, his was a minority voice within the chiefs who warned New Zealand that Britain felt strongly that any reduction in New Zealand's naval division would have "most serious

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[47] Letter and Draft Paper on RNZAF, Cochrane to Berendsen, 3 February 1937, NANZ EA1 85/1/1 pt. 1.

[48] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 27-28.

[49] British Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 16 March 1937, NANZ EA1 85/1/1 pt. 1 p. 3.

[50] ibid., p. 11.

[51] McGibbon, p. 270.

effects on the security of the Dominion" and no local air forces could protect New Zealand in the long run.[52]

New Zealand's Naval Secretary, Commander Edward Tottenham, warned that "as the situation in Europe becomes more pressing, the chances of Great Britain being able to come to the relief of Singapore must diminish." He also warned of the consequences of a Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies or against the Philippines, from which the United States were scheduled to leave in 1945. The Japanese were imbued with the idea that their national mission was to dominate the Far East and exclude the Western nations. New Zealand's first priority, therefore, should be to "render every assistance ... towards making Singapore and Hong Kong impregnable against Japanese attack" and then to prepare the coastal, naval and air defences of New Zealand against Japanese raids. There was a natural tendency, Tottenham argued, "to devote more attention to the problem of local defence and to neglect the fact that defeat in the main theatre of operations spells dangerous insecurity for New Zealand." New Zealand's army should have forces stationed in Singapore and Hong Kong because comparatively small forces employed to garrison these places could contain very much larger forces, which might otherwise be used to invade Australia or New Zealand. New Zealand's air force should be able to fly to Singapore and its navy to steam there.[53]

In a meeting with the British Chiefs of Staff on 16 March 1937, Walter Nash, then New Zealand's Minister of Finance, confirmed that the three defence interests of the Dominion remained "the defence of New Zealand territory itself, the defence of communications in the Pacific and the general defence of the interests of the whole Commonwealth." He also said that his government was committed to the considerable expenditure involved in accepting Cochrane's report and believed that with the limited amount of money available for defence spending, New Zealand would be better served by an air force than by continued spending on naval forces such as the two cruisers *Leander* and *Achilles*, which could well be serving elsewhere at the time New Zealand was threatened. The British Chiefs of Staff countered that while it was extremely unlikely that the Japanese would "consider it worthwhile to

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[52] ibid., p. 271.
[53] Naval Secretary to Minister of Defence, 12 March 1937, NANZ EA 1 156/2/1.

detach naval forces over 4,000 miles away merely for the sake of firing a few shells into the ports of New Zealand", it was essential that New Zealand and Australian naval forces were sufficient to cope with Japanese raids during the period before the relief of Singapore. This period was now estimated at being about two months. Moreover, they argued, the two cruisers, besides providing local defence, would be of imperial value in helping to increase British strength in the Pacific whereas the 24 aircraft would provide only local security.[54]

Nash pointed out that the aircraft could be used to reinforce Singapore which was only 36 hours away by air. To which the Chiefs of Staff replied with what in hindsight can only appear as unintended irony that "once the Main Fleet had arrived at Singapore there would be no pressing need for air reinforcements there". According to Nash, although New Zealand was "a small country at a great distance from the United Kingdom", it could not isolate itself from the general interests of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, New Zealand wished first to concentrate on its own local defence." New Zealand could be self-sufficient in food and could hold out for a long period even if communications were cut. The main threat, therefore, was from raiders which he and his government felt were best met by defending aircraft. Eventually, New Zealand promised to maintain its previously undertaken naval commitments and made no immediate changes to army preparations, so there were no funds immediately available for air force development.[55]

The intractable chaos of British Commonwealth strategy in the Pacific was surveyed with dignity and commonsense.

(Frederick L. W. Wood, 1958)

New Zealand's Labour government maintained what has been called a "dual policy". The contradictions of this policy were highlighted at the Imperial Conference in London, during May 1937, when Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage criticised Britain's appeasement of aggressors and lack of direction in the League of Nations, while still insisting that Britain promise to send the fleet to the Far East. It was becoming increasingly clear by this time, however, that New Zealand would stand or fall with the Commonwealth rather than the League of Nations. New Zealand's Chiefs

[54] British Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 16 March 1937, NANZ EA1 85/1/1 pt. 1 p.5.
[55] ibid., p.5.

of Staff continued to warn that a Japanese expedition against the country was not likely as long as Singapore was secure, yet Japanese raids from their mandated islands in the central Pacific could certainly harass New Zealand and its shipping and possibly prevent it from reaching vital theatres. It was at this conference that Britain's Chiefs of Staff had warned that the chief danger to imperial defence would come if Britain was threatened by Germany and Japan, with an aggressive Italy in the Mediterranean. If this were the case, the size and timing of the fleet sent to Singapore could well depend on "conditions which have actually arisen." Meanwhile, in New Zealand, many were beginning to feel that the Pacific Islands were New Zealand's frontier. A powerful air force from New Zealand and Australia, based along a line from New Guinea, through Fiji to Samoa and the Cook Islands might well offer the best protection New Zealand could have.[56]

Conditions continued to deteriorate in Europe, with the *Anschluss* occurring in March 1938 followed by the Czech crises in September of the same year. On 14 October, Savage received a sternly-worded memo from Carl Berendsen, who warned that because of the situation in Europe it was no longer realistic to make plans based on the British fleet being sent to Singapore. Instead, the current air scheme should be hastened and the army built up, even if it meant some form of compulsory service.[57] The Chiefs of Staff followed this with their own report in which they cautioned that a European war could well delay the British fleet and leave the Japanese fleet and German raiders unchallenged in the Pacific for some months. Moreover, if Japan occupied the Pacific islands, especially Fiji, Tonga, the New Hebrides or New Caledonia, this would pose a serious threat to New Zealand. The protection of these islands was now, according to the chiefs, of "vital interest" to New Zealand, and consequently the air reconnaissance routes should be established as well as a third bomber squadron and increased Territorial Air Force squadrons.[58] Important discussion of all these matters would soon take place between New Zealand officials and service delegates from Britain and Australia, at the Pacific Defence Conference held in Wellington from 14 to 26 April 1939.

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[56] McIntyre *New Zealand Prepares for War,* p. 189.
[57] McGibbon, pp. 392-396.
[58] McIntyre *New Zealand Prepares for War,* p. 202.

The strategic significance of the Pacific Islands had been mentioned in 1919 by Bettington and Jellicoe but it was not until nearly twenty years later that they began to cause real concern in New Zealand because of their potential as stepping-stones for air routes, both civil and military, across the Pacific. By the late 1930s, New Zealand found itself in the midst of an intense Anglo-American race to establish these routes. New Zealand hoped for a Commonwealth trans-Pacific link while also being aware of the important role that the United States must necessarily play. By the end of 1934, Imperial Airways and Qantas Empire Airways had opened a route from London to Brisbane via Singapore. The following year, the New Zealand government agreed to a British proposal for an Empire-wide air mail scheme, and Tasman Empire Airways Limited was established to provide the trans-Tasman connection. Later in 1935, the government also made an agreement with Pan American Airways for a service between Honolulu and Auckland via Kingman Reef (Line Islands) and Pago Pago in American Samoa. Britain hoped - in vain, as it happened - that this could be used to bargain for landing rights for a Commonwealth airline in Honolulu and San Francisco. This race for air routes across the Pacific suddenly drew attention to many islands which had been previously ignored, some of which were unoccupied and subject to conflicting sovereignty claims especially the Phoenix, Line and Tokelau groups between Hawaii and Samoa.[59]

When the United States Navy moved to extend American control over some of these islands, the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy, HMS *Leith, Wellington* and later *Leander* and *Achilles*, were sent out in 1936 and 1937 to re-assert British sovereignty by erecting flags and noticeboards and investigating possible sites for aircraft use. While the British and Americans continued to contest the use and sovereignty of the islands, the New Zealand service chiefs again warned the government of their importance to New Zealand. The New Zealand government should be prepared to subsidise British and Dominion air services in the Pacific because "a dominating position in civil aviation in the Southern Pacific is of paramount importance to the defence of New Zealand and Australia."[60] In his report,

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[59]For a detailed discussion of the air routes controversy see A. F. Peachey, "Air Power and Problems of Sovereignty in the South Pacific, 1935-41", M.A.(Hons) Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1972, University of Canterbury Library, especially pp. 3-11.

[60] Commercial Airways in the Pacific Ocean, Navy Paper No. 7, March 1937, NANZ EA 1 156/2/1.

Cochrane had stressed the importance of the islands to the defence of New Zealand. After discussions with Squadron Leader Leonard Isitt, a "genial, able man of considerable vision", who was Commanding Officer of the Permanent Air Force station at Hobsonville, Cochrane urged the need for "an early reconnaissance of islands between New Zealand and Hawaii for possible use as a reinforcement route from the United States to Australia and New Zealand."[61] Cochrane had also suggested the possibility of a conference to coordinate plans for the Pacific islands and on 10 March 1937, a joint services paper was presented which suggested a joint British, Australian and New Zealand study of the strategic importance of the islands. When no action was taken on these suggestions, Cochrane urged the government in a Chiefs of Staff paper in February 1938 that, while the navy had gathered useful material on the islands, a full survey was still needed. Cochrane was anxious to make preparations in the islands for the Wellington bombers which would be arriving in 1940, and stressed the "especial importance" of Fiji and Tonga from which modern bombers could easily reach New Zealand.[62] The cabinet accepted that New Zealand and Britain should share the costs for surveying the four air-reconnaissance routes Cochrane had proposed to be based on Fiji, and in May 1938 official invitations were sent out to Australia, Britain and the Western Pacific High Commission.

It would be almost another year before the conference was called. The British Chiefs of Staff accepted the idea of a conference but wanted its scope clarified. For internal political reasons the Australians were not so enthusiastic, while in New Zealand there existed only a "hazy idea" that the Pacific Islands were of some use to the country but of what use and how they were to be defended was unclear.[63] In the meantime, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff made a brief tour of some of the Pacific islands and produced a paper in which they suggested that both Fiji and Tonga could be attacked by large enemy forces and their defence should therefore be strengthened by the addition of coastal guns, infantry and airfields.[64]

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[61] Driscoll, pp. 21-22, 44-46. Driscoll suggests that it was Isitt who drew Cochrane's attention to the Pacific islands in the first place.

[62] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 12 February 1938, NANZ EA 1 81/4/2a-1, New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 6, 3 February 1938, EA 1 81/4/3-1.

[63] Wood, p. 73.

[64] "Defence Problems of the Fijian and Tongan Groups", New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 16, December 1938, NANZ EA 1 81/4/3-1.

As a lead up to the conference, the British Chiefs of Staff also sent an Imperial Defence paper to New Zealand in which they once again stressed that British policy in the event of war was the protection of the United Kingdom and then Singapore which "must be held at all costs." Britain would reinforce Singapore with land and air forces from India and Iraq to ensure that Singapore would hold out against any sea-borne Japanese attack pending the arrival of naval reinforcements. Should Japan intervene against Britain then the British Government would dispatch a fleet to Eastern waters "irrespective of the situation elsewhere". The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were concerned that the size and composition of the fleet would depend on operations in the Atlantic and no accurate indication had yet been given as to the time which might elapse before it actually arrived. However, the British statement, they agreed, went further than any previous statement and in their view cleared up any doubts that may have existed as to whether, in the event of war with Japan, immediate steps would be taken to reinforce the naval forces in the Far East. The Chiefs of Staff recommended that New Zealand takeover three additional British naval vessels for manning and maintenance, and prepare to provide an infantry battalion and a general reconnaissance squadron as garrison forces for Singapore. They also once again stressed the crucial importance of defending Fiji which in their view would be "the most likely objective of the Japanese" in the Pacific.[65]

The Pacific Defence Conference eventually took place in April 1939 where, according to the official New Zealand historian, Frederick Wood, "the intractable chaos of British Commonwealth strategy in the Pacific was surveyed with dignity and commonsense".[66] New Zealand naturally had a large delegation including Savage, Nash, Peter Fraser, Berendsen and other top civil-servants, and the Chiefs of Staff. Britain's delegation was headed by Sir Harry Batterbee, the first British High Commissioner to New Zealand, and included Sir Harry Luke, the Western Pacific High Commissioner and Governor of Fiji, as well as several high ranking service officials. Australia sent a senior civil servant and representatives from each service. At the conference, Savage started discussions by saying that New Zealand wanted to

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[65] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 22, "Comments on the Paper on Imperial Defence, with special reference to New Zealand, drawn up by the Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence", 4 April 1939, NANZ EA 1 81/4/3 pt 5.
[66] Wood, p. 72.

protect itself and also to "co-operate with other parts of the British Empire in the protection of the whole of the British Empire." Next, Berendsen presented a realistic scenario for defence officials to start working with by closely examining and exposing all of the qualifications which surrounded the British guarantee to send the fleet to Singapore in case of war with Japan. There was a strong possibility, he concluded, that circumstances might arise that would mean Britain might find it impossible to send to Singapore a fleet of sufficient strength.[67]

British delegates tried to reassure the conference by drawing attention to the many variables involved, such as the timing of war with Germany or the action that Japan or even the United States and the Soviet Union might take. Unfortunately, however, the reply that New Zealand should "take to the Waitomo Caves" was not very reassuring when Nash asked what New Zealand should do if the Singapore strategy did fail.[68] Other discussions centred on how long the Singapore base itself might be expected to hold out in the face of Japanese attack, the likely scale of Japanese offensives in the Pacific, including direct attack against Australia and New Zealand. While strong doubts were inevitably raised about the validity of the Singapore strategy, the conference nonetheless concluded that it was still central to the defence of New Zealand and as such New Zealand should plan a contribution to the defence of Singapore. The head of the Australian delegation, Vice-Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin, reported back to the Australian government that his chief impressions were of the New Zealand government's reluctance to undertake overseas military commitments in peacetime, their anxiety about the maintenance of the flow of trade between New Zealand and the United Kingdom in wartime, and their preoccupation with the danger of "Japanese aggression via Fiji and the Islands." In his opinion, the New Zealand government was ready to increase its army for home defence and its naval capacity "within their financial capacity" and desired close co-operation on defence matters with Britain and especially with Australia. The New Zealanders, he

[67] McGibbon, pp. 396-402.
[68] Wood, p. 77.

said, had also expressed "genuine appreciation of, and indeed surprise ... at the magnitude of the Australian defence effort."[69]

The conference agreed that Fiji was crucial for the defence of New Zealand, while the Australians were more concerned with New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to their immediate north. Rather than Cochrane's scheme of radial air reconnaissance from Fiji, the two countries agreed to maintain, as an early warning system, an air reconnaissance line across the Pacific. Australia would be responsible for the line from New Guinea through the Solomons to the New Hebrides, and New Zealand from there on to Fiji and Tonga. Members of the conference also discussed civil aviation in the Pacific and hoped to find a solution to Anglo-American differences either by negotiating for reciprocal landing rights with the Americans or having a joint service with Commonwealth airlines operating south of Hawaii, and American airlines to the north.[70] The New Zealand government remained "intensely uneasy" that the Americans might gain advantage in the Pacific while Britain was preoccupied in Europe, but the matter was not pursued because it was thought better to prepare to beat likely enemies rather than irritate a potential friend.[71]

For New Zealand defence thinking, the conference was "a decisive experience", or at least it would have been decisive "if time for effective action still remained."[72] The conference had confirmed that the basic strategy for the defence of the Pacific was still to await the arrival of the British fleet at Singapore, albeit with a possibly considerable delay. In the interval between the advent of war in the Pacific and the arrival of the fleet, the most likely scale of attack against New Zealand was still thought to be small-scale raids against ports and other strategic locations. At the same time, however, it was admitted that New Zealand should prepare for a substantially larger scale of attack which could not be ruled out completely. In New Zealand, increases were planned for the navy and the army, which would have to garrison Fiji and Fanning Island, while the air force would take responsibility for the reconnaissance line from the New Hebrides to Tonga, the preparation of airfields in

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[69] Report of Pacific Defence Conference from Colvin to Brigadier G. A. Street, Minister of State for Defence, Navy Office Secret and Confidential Correspondence Files, Australian National Archives Canberra, MP 1049/9 File: 1846/4/101.

[70] Peachey, pp. 82-94

[71] Wood, p. 79.

[72] ibid., p. 72.

Fiji and Tonga and the stockpiling of supplies in Fiji. New Zealand also undertook to increase its output of fully-trained pilots to 280 per year by December 1940 and further training aircraft such as the modern British twin-engined Airspeed Oxford were ordered.[73]

War has broken out as from 9.30 pm.

(New Zealand Prime Minister's Office, 3 September 1939)

From the time of the RNZAF's creation as a separate service in April 1937, it had undergone a remarkable rate of growth and by the beginning of 1939 expenditure on the air force had already passed both the army and the navy.[74] Bases at Ohakea and Whenuapai were almost completed, as were the flight training schools at Wigram and Blenheim, while in Britain the first flight of Wellington bombers had been taken over by their New Zealand crews for training. Attention was also being given to the development of the regional Territorial Air Force squadrons for local defence and moves were being made to build up a reserve of air force technical staff, especially mechanics and wireless operators.[75] As international tension mounted during 1939, it became increasingly clear that war was not far off. On 24 August, the government advised the Air Department that the "alert" stage had been declared and appropriate action should be taken. New Zealand offered to place its Wellingtons and the crews then training in Britain at the disposal of the RAF, and this offer was gratefully accepted by the British government. On 1 September, the Governor-General issued a proclamation of emergency, and the next day the British Government signalled that the "precautionary" stage had been adopted against Germany and Italy, and that the British Army and the Royal Air Force had been ordered to mobilise. On 3 September the Prime Minister's Office advised the Air Department: "war has broken out as from 9.30 pm", and the RNZAF was ordered to mobilise. The Territorial squadrons were called up for mobilisation and a call was issued for volunteers as aircrew and ground staff.[76]

From the earliest days of conflict in Poland, the British war cabinet was convinced that Britain must obtain air supremacy if it was to survive. This would

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[73] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force,* pp. 32-34.
[74] McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War,* p. 227.
[75] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 38-39.

require much larger numbers of aircrew than could possibly be trained within Britain, so a scheme was proposed whereby the members of the empire would contribute aircrew for an empire-wide training scheme, based on Canada. Canada had practically unlimited space for the development of aerodromes, considerable industrial potential, and was close to the resources of the United States. In 1938, Cochrane had suggested that New Zealand might make an effective contribution to Empire defence in this way and the British Air Ministry had been willing to subsidise pilot training, much as had already been done during the First World War, and on a limited scale during the interwar years.[77] In October 1939, at a conference in Ottawa, the New Zealand government agreed to supply 880 fully-trained pilots per year for service in the Royal Air Force. As well as these, 520 pilots per year would be trained in New Zealand to an elementary standard, while 546 observers and 936 air-gunners would be trained only to an initial stage. All these men would be sent to Canada to complete their training and then go on to serve with the RAF.[78] Under Article XV of the Empire Air Training Scheme Agreement, the British Government undertook that all aircrew from the Dominions would be "identified with their respective Dominions, either by the method of organising Dominion units and formations or in some other way ... to be agreed upon with the respective Dominion Governments concerned".[79] Altogether, seven squadrons with New Zealand identity were formed in the RAF and manned largely by New Zealanders. Moreover, New Zealanders were represented in almost every RAF unit that served during the war.

The rapid expansion programme of the RNZAF, begun with its establishment as a separate service in 1937, was well under way, although still far from complete by the outbreak of the Second World War. New Zealand's decision to leave the Wellingtons and their crews in Britain was "strategically sensible" even though it seriously undermined the country's local defence in the face of German merchant raiders in the Pacific.[80] The RNZAF was responsible for coastal reconnaissance and defence in New Zealand and a general reconnaissance squadron was formed in Fiji.

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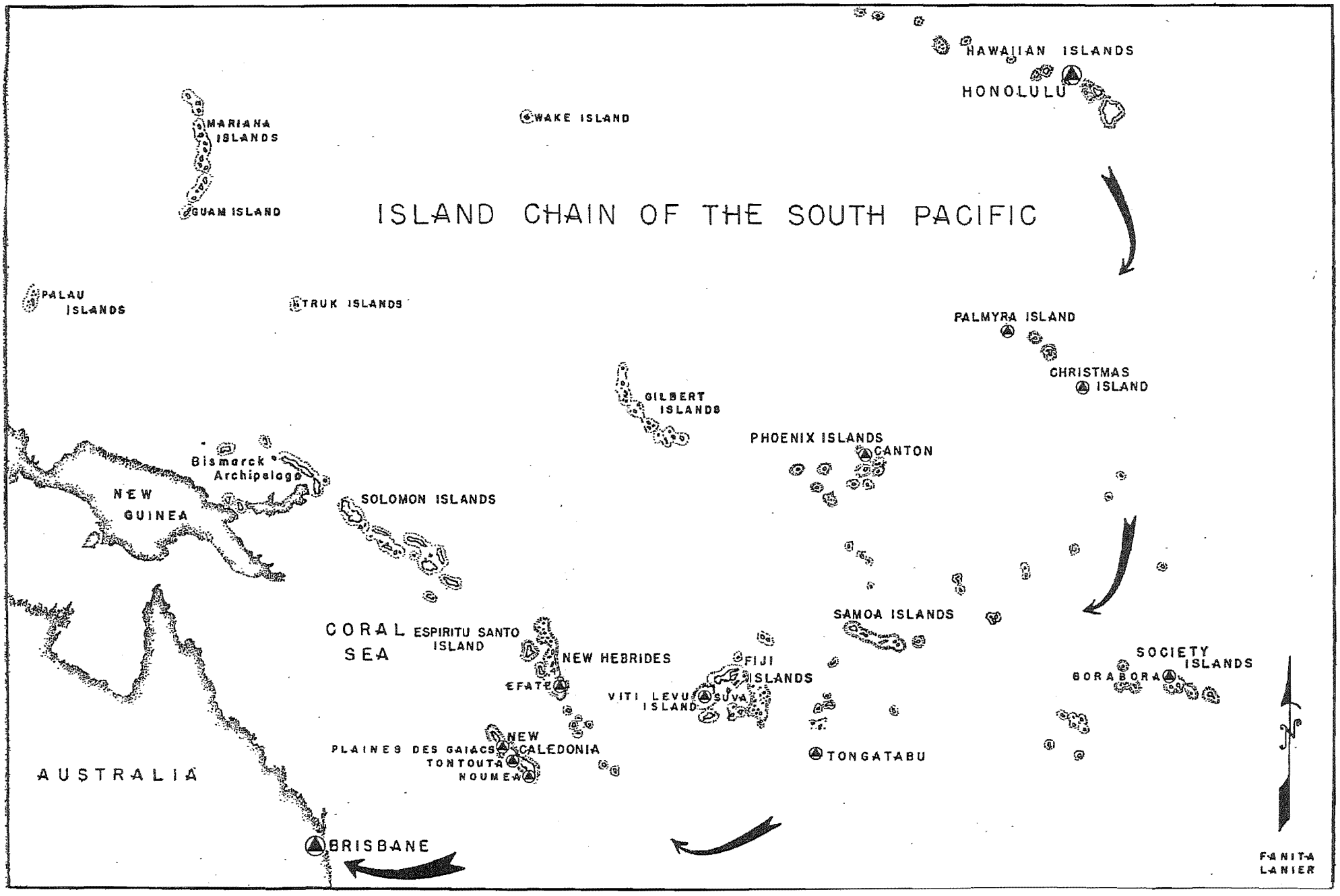
[76] ibid., p. 40.
[77] ibid., pp. 4-6, 30.
[78] ibid., p. 51.
[79] J. Robertson & J. McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy 1939-1945: A Documentary History*, University of Queensland Press, 1985, Document 44.
[80] McGibbon, p. 346.

Its principal responsibility, at this stage of the war, however, was imperial; the training of men for the Royal Air Force. According to the New Zealand Air Department report for the last year of the war, under the Commonwealth Air Training Programme a total of 13,158 trained and semi-trained aircrew were passed through New Zealand schools, the bulk of whom were despatched to the United Kingdom and Canada for service with the Royal Air Force. The scheme necessitated the retention within New Zealand of approximately 10,000 trained airmen and represented "the major contribution of the RNZAF to the war".[81]

[81] Report on the Air Department for the Year 1945-1946, *AJHR*, H-37, 1946, p. 2.


ISLAND CHAIN OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
HONOLULU
WAKE ISLAND
MARIANA ISLANDS
GUAM ISLAND
PALAU ISLANDS
TRUK ISLANDS
PALMYRA ISLAND
CHRISTMAS ISLAND
GILBERT ISLANDS
PHOENIX ISLANDS
CANTON
Bismarck Archipelago
NEW GUINEA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
SAMOA ISLANDS
CORAL SEA
ESPIRITU SANTO ISLAND
NEW HEBRIDES
EFATE
FIJI ISLANDS
VITI LEVU ISLAND
SUVA
SOCIETY ISLANDS
BORABORA
NEW CALEDONIA
PLAINES DES GAIACS
TONTOUTA
NOUMEA
TONGATABU
AUSTRALIA
BRISBANE
FANITA LANIER

Chapter Two

The Japanese Threat

To be completely frank, we have not always felt that the potential problems of the Pacific have had the importance attached to them in London which we, more intimately concerned therewith, have considered that they have perhaps deserved.

(Peter Fraser, 12 January 1942)

By the time Europe began the process of tearing itself apart, the RNZAF's development programme was well under way and, like New Zealand's other forces, the air force was preparing to fulfil the dual role of local and empire defence. Some in New Zealand held out hope that an accommodation might be reached with Germany even at this late stage, but for most the time had come to "call a halt to Hitler". In a press statement in March 1939, New Zealand's Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage had reaffirmed that "New Zealand would be found wherever Britain was when Britain was in trouble." On 4 September 1939, he announced that "both with gratitude for the past, and with confidence in the future, we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go, where she stands, we stand". Through the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme, New Zealand began training airmen for the Royal Air Force and it was this task which remained the essential function of the RNZAF until the outbreak of war in the Pacific. New Zealand's navy was placed under Admiralty command and when the army began recruiting for an overseas contingent, almost 12,000 volunteered in the first week. According to Wood, "public sentiment and the adventurousness of youth" meant that Peter Fraser's sober remark that New Zealand might better serve the war effort by maintaining farm production rather than providing fighting men was "out of key with the times".[1]

If New Zealand's main contributions to the war were, as had been expected, geared to the British war effort, the growing tension in the Pacific was also forcing New Zealand to look seriously for the first time towards the United States. There had been hopes that the Commonwealth would not have to face Japan without American assistance, or even that the United States Pacific Fleet might be sent to Singapore, yet

[1] Wood, pp. 11, 93-98.

little had been done to arrange closer relations with the United States.[2] In a survey of New Zealand-American relations, Mary Lissington wrote that "political contacts between New Zealand and the United States before 1939 were few, despite the common interest each nation had in Pacific security. On the isolated occasions when the Pacific did bring them together, it was usually to disagree."[3]

In June 1940, Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, admitted to the Pacific Dominions that if Japan were to take advantage of the European war to expand in the Pacific, the Royal Navy - facing Germany and Italy without the help of France - would not be able to send a fleet to Singapore. In this event, New Zealand was informed, "we should therefore have to rely on the United States of America to safeguard our interests there." As early as 1913, Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, had warned that "if the power of Great Britain were shattered upon the sea, the only course open to the five millions of white men in the Pacific would be to seek the protection of the United States."[4] Australia and New Zealand faced what would later come to be called the 'ANZAC dilemma'. While Britain was their traditional protector, they were increasingly having to come to terms with the relatively unknown power of the United States, whose support at this stage was still far from guaranteed.

On 15 June 1940, New Zealand's Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, replied to Churchill's warning in what Wood argued was possibly the "most important single document in the formation of New Zealand foreign policy." A departure had been made, Fraser cabled Churchill, "from the understanding, reinforced by repeated and most explicit assurances, that a strong British fleet would be available to, and would, proceed to Singapore should the circumstances so require even if this involved the abandonment of British interests in the Mediterranean." While New Zealand did not "in any way demur to the decision," which they had long regarded as a possibility, nevertheless, the promise to send the fleet had "formed the basis of the whole of this Dominion's defence preparations." Fraser asked firstly that the situation be reviewed if the position in the Far East should become more threatening, and secondly, for British agreement to the dispatch of a New Zealand cabinet minister to Washington on

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[2] McIntyre, *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base,* pp. 156, 176-180.
[3] M. P. Lissington, *New Zealand and the United States 1840-1944*, Wellington, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1972, p. 12.
[4] McGibbon, pp. 14-15.

a special mission "in the hope of strengthening the security of the Pacific and of reinforcing the representations already made to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on behalf of the Allies."[5]

The British Government was against such a move because the obstacle to greater United States involvement in the war came from the American public rather than from Washington. Britain felt that such a move by New Zealand might be interpreted in the United States as "an effort to influence the forthcoming Presidential election and to drag the United States into war." Fraser replied on 9 July 1940 that perhaps those in Britain did not quite understand the urgency with which New Zealand regarded the establishment of "more intimate relations" with the United States. This was necessary, not merely to satisfy public opinion, but also to assist:

> directly in establishing as far as possible the principle that the United States cannot be disinterested in the isolated British communities in this area and to lead as delicately as possible to the active co-operation of the United States in assisting to preserve the political integrity and economic well-being of those communities.[6]

To avoid the risk of misunderstanding, New Zealand was prepared to abandon the idea of a special mission and instead to seek permanent diplomatic relations. Britain and the United States both agreed to this and on 23 December 1940, Washington gave formal approval for the exchange of diplomatic representatives with New Zealand.

It would be nearly a year before New Zealand's first minister to the United States was officially appointed by Fraser because he could not decide whom to send. Fraser had to appoint a cabinet member who would be suitable in Washington in the event of a crisis in the Pacific, but the only suitable candidates could not be spared from Wellington. During this time, New Zealand was represented by former Prime Minister, and current opposition member of the war cabinet, Joseph Gordon Coates. Coates was sent to Washington to discuss the supply of war materials and was thought by some American officials to be a particularly able representative and a far more suitable choice for defence minister than Jones.[7] New Zealand was also represented by Frank Langstone, Minister of Lands, who was in Washington for trade discussions

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[5] Wood, pp. 194-195.
[6] Lissington, p. 28.
[7] Cox to Secretary of State, 27 March 1942, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5115, File 847h.00104.

and to make preliminary arrangements for the New Zealand Legation. To handle New Zealand procurements under the Lend-Lease Act, a New Zealand supply mission was also set up, on Coates' advice, in May 1941. This was part of the British supply mission, which still had the authority to approve all New Zealand's requisitions before they could be advanced. Two months later, a Royal Navy officer, Lieutenant-Commander R. J. Bailey, was appointed to the New Zealand mission as the Naval Supply Liaison Officer.[8] On 19 November, Walter Nash, now the Deputy Prime Minister, was appointed Minister to the United States and in January 1942, Patrick J. Hurley, a former Secretary of State for War, was appointed United States Minister to New Zealand. From then on paying attention to American opinion and seeking consultation with the United States as well as the United Kingdom became major concerns of the New Zealand government.

The abandonment of appeasement in Europe might mean its intensification in Asia
(Frederick L. W. Wood, 1958)

During the second half of 1940, mine-laying and attacks by the German commerce raiders *Orion* and *Komet* accounted for four ships in New Zealand waters, one off New Caledonia and five close to Nauru. Australia and New Zealand agreed that they should co-ordinate naval and air forces against this threat and in December, the New Zealand government sent an urgent request to the British Prime Minister for a "limited number" of Lockheed Hudson twin-engined reconnaissance-bombers to help remedy the situation.[9] The public were becoming "restive", Fraser warned Churchill, and "even a few suitable aircraft - say half a dozen" which would of course be available for reinforcements elsewhere as far as Singapore should the occasion arise, would enable New Zealand to take action against the raiders.[10]

Despite this, the war continued to remain distant from those New Zealanders not already serving overseas, both in terms of geography and involvement. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff agreed that British policy should be to avoid an open clash

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[8] Lissington, pp. 29-30.
[9] Co-ordination of Australian and New Zealand Forces in the Pacific, NANZ Air 1 130/3/2.
[10] Fraser to Churchill, 4 December 1940, *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War, Volumes I-III: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45,* Wellington, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1949-1951, 1963 (hereafter *Documents*), Volume III, pp. 214-215.

with Japan, while seeking a "wide settlement in the Far East" and building up defences in the area "as soon as possible". The chiefs were greatly heartened when Churchill assured them that: "if ... contrary to prudence and self-interest Japan set about invading Australia and New Zealand on a large scale ... we should then cut our losses in the Mediterranean and proceed to your aid sacrificing every interest except only the defence of the safety of this island on which all depends". Even now, the foundation of British Empire strategy was still "to base on Singapore a fleet strong enough to provide cover for our communications and to frustrate any large scale operations by Japan against Australia, New Zealand or our Far Eastern possessions."[11]

The commitment of New Zealand troops to the Middle East depended on the neutrality of Japan. Despite sympathy for the Chinese, "the paradoxical reality," according to Wood, "seemed to be that the abandonment of appeasement in Europe might mean its intensification in Asia." By late 1940, however, American policy towards Japan had stiffened so much that some Americans believed they might find themselves at war with Japan while the Commonwealth remained neutral. They were quickly reassured by Britain, Australia and New Zealand, even though the British Commonwealth had received no similar assurance from the United States.[12]

New Zealand was aware that the scale of Japanese attack would depend "entirely on the Japanese interpretation of the United States' intentions."[13] When Britain was somewhat cool about American proposals to restrict exports of certain materials to Japan, the New Zealand Government warned against causing "resentment and misunderstanding" in the United States. In its opinion "it would be wise to pay less regard to the susceptibilities of Japan ... and on the other hand to attach the greatest possible weight to good relations with the United States and to the encouragement in every possible way of every American tendency towards resisting or restraining aggression."[14]

In conversation with Robert English, American consul in Wellington, none of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff expressed any apprehension of an immediate

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[11] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 51, 3 September 1940, Comments by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff on the Appreciation of the Situation in the Far East, prepared by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-2, pp. 1-4.

[12] Wood, pp. 192-193, 199.

[13] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 80, Comments on the Far East Appreciation of Australian Chiefs of Staff, 27 February 1941, p. 1, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

Japanese threat arising in connection with the expected German invasion attempt on Britain. Their most pressing problem remained continued shipping losses to German raiders in the Pacific. A disquieting fact, English reported to Washington, was that through the Japanese consulate and other sources, the enemy was obtaining information regarding New Zealand shipping. So far steps taken to prevent this had proven ineffective and much as New Zealand's military authorities desired the removal of Vice Consul Nakafuji, whose cables increased in length at the time of ship movements, no action could be taken. Several newspaper editorials had urged the government to take more effective steps to safeguard shipping intelligence, and English believed that pressure was also coming from London.[15] The Japanese consulate in Wellington was currently under the charge of a junior vice consul. The previous Japanese consul general had remained only a few weeks in New Zealand during which time he had travelled around the country allegedly studying the country's defences. Before leaving for Japan again, the New Zealand Prime Minister bluntly told the consul, and asked him to pass it on to his government, that New Zealand wished to be on friendly terms with Japan, but would resist to the best of its ability any encroachment on its rights.[16]

Of the three Chiefs of Staff, Major-General Sir John Duigan was the only New Zealander and very concerned with national defence. The 68-year-old Duigan had had an active military career beginning in the Boer War and while he was not particularly sympathetic to some members of the Labour Government, there was little doubt that he was New Zealand's most experienced military man whose "genial and friendly manner" made for the smooth running of army affairs. The other two were "by habit of thought as well as place of birth, inclined to think of Empire defence first, and New Zealand defence secondarily". English found Commodore William Parry, the Chief of Naval Staff, "a good example of the best type of English naval officer ... friendly but reserved". New Zealand's Chief of Air Staff, a South African-born RAF officer,

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[14] Lissington, p. 25.

[15] Robert English to United States Secretary of State, 16 January 1941, NARA, RG 59, Box 5116, File 847H.20/34 PS/FF.

[16] Political Report for Period April-May 1941, Raymond E. Cox to United States Secretary of State, 27 May 1941, NARA 847H.00/91 RG 59 Box 5115, p. 14.

Air Commodore Hugh Saunders, he found to be of a type likely to appeal to New Zealanders: "a fine type of officer ... aided by an attractive and energetic wife".[17]

The three told the American consul that New Zealand's principal harbours were now adequately defended by guns, and the army could deal with an invasion force of two or three divisions by retiring to the mountains throughout the country. They also told him that they believed that if Japan did enter the war and attack the Netherlands East Indies, Australia or New Zealand, then the United States would necessarily become involved and they were already including this in their defence calculations. English reported to the United States Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that all three had a very friendly attitude towards the United States which, he felt, "would be translated into effective co-operation should the need arise". In fact, he concluded, "I feel that special mention should be made of the extraordinarily friendly feeling on the part of Government officials and others towards the United States". This was especially true of the Prime Minister who was leading the way in meeting visiting American officials and complimenting the American President.[18]

At the Singapore Defence Conference in February 1941, Australian, Dutch and British representatives agreed on the urgent need for collective action in the event of a Japanese movement against either Malaya or the Netherlands East Indies, which they viewed as initially more likely than an invasion of Australia or New Zealand.[19] By mid-1941, many in the New Zealand government were beginning to consider the need to put increased effort into local defence and the defence of the Pacific area rather than the Mediterranean campaigns where New Zealand forces were taking heavy casualties. The Chiefs of Staff recommended the early completion of a co-ordination plan for the Far East and Netherlands East Indies, and the return of New Zealand naval forces operating overseas.[20]

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[17] Robert English to United States Secretary of State, 16 January 1941, Saunders replaced Cochrane as Chief of Air Staff in March 1939.

[18] ibid.

[19] New Zealand was represented by Australia, and the United States sent observers only, New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 83, Singapore Defence Conference February 1941, 20 March 1941, Appendix B, pp. 1, 6-7, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

[20] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 80, Comments on the Far East Appreciation of Australian Chiefs of Staff, 27 February 1941, p. 2 (agreeing with Appendix A. p. 4). New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 83, Singapore Defence Conference February 1941, 20 March 1941, Appendix C, p. 3. Also Chiefs of Staff Paper 86, Singapore Defence Conference (A.D.A Conference), 2 April 1941, p. 2., NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

In a confidential report back to Washington, the new American Consul General, Raymond E. Cox, confirmed that the collapse of the British defence of Greece had caused "considerable anxiety" in New Zealand. Many felt that the next German objective after Greece and Crete would be the Suez Canal, the loss of which would mean the extension of the war against the British Empire to the East. Cox reminded Hull that while it had often been said that the New Zealand war effort was not what it should be, especially as the labour unions seemed more concerned with themselves than the war, it seemed only fair to point out with a population of only 1.6 million, New Zealand could "hardly spare more men for service overseas in a war which, unlike that of 1914-18, may yet come close to its own shores". The American also noted that the Labour Government was finally turning its attention from providing for its public works and social programme to the now inevitable necessity of spending public funds on national defence. However, the change had come too late for Cox's friend General Duigan who, on his retirement, told him that he was "weary after so many years of pressing and persuading the unwilling Labour Government to make proper provision for the Army". The hurried dispatch of Coates on a mission to the United States and Semple to Australia to obtain military supplies and munitions were, to Cox, "indicative of the government's tardy change of policy on this vital matter".[21]

Since the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, Cox believed, New Zealand interest in the United States generally and in American foreign policy in particular, had gone up in leaps and bounds in exact measure as the United States appeared to New Zealanders to be moving in the direction of involvement in the war. Statements by prominent American politicians and statesmen in support of Great Britain were quoted extensively and became the subject of "daily fervent and flattering editorials too many in number and too lengthy and uniform in content to require quotation". This new enthusiasm was further heightened when President Roosevelt announced his decision to extend the range of United States Navy ocean patrols in the Atlantic. The German Naval Chief Admiral Erich Raeder's reported threat to treat the convoying of war materials to Britain by United States ships as an act of war was received in New Zealand as another step towards America's inevitable involvement in aid of Britain.

[21] "Political Report for Period April-May 1941", pp. 5-6.

"The more the United States is impelled to back Britain and the Empire in the war", Cox informed the Secretary, "the warmer will be the sentiment of this Dominion towards it." This sentiment was also due, he felt, to the "somewhat faint but growing realisation that the future of New Zealand may depend more than hitherto had been imagined - or desired - on the United States and its course of action in the Pacific".[22]

In July 1941, Fraser cabled his government from London that Japan's entry into the war seemed "likely and imminent". Even at this stage, however, the war remained remote from New Zealand. According to Wood, the difference between "the thunderous atmosphere of Europe and the obstinately normal course of life in the South Pacific," meant that a sense of unreality persisted which was dissipated, and then only briefly, in the months following the apparent disaster at Pearl Harbor.[23]

Fiji will lie astride any Japanese attempt to penetrate southwards.
(General Sir Guy Williams, October 1941)

As war in the Pacific began to appear increasingly likely, New Zealand sent an army brigade group to defend Fiji. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff continued to argue that the retention of Singapore was "vital to the security of the Far East", but increasingly essential was Fiji from where modern aircraft could easily reach New Zealand.[24] They recommended that a brigade should be sent to Fiji before actual hostilities broke out because once they did, Japan would initially have local command of the sea communications around Fiji and Tonga, making it extremely hazardous to transport reinforcements without a very strong naval escort which, in the early days of war was "unlikely to be available." Interestingly, at this stage the Chiefs of Staff also assumed that "in the event of war with Japan ... the defence of New Zealand, in which the defence of Fiji plays an important role, will take precedence over the maintenance of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force." Reinforcements for this force

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[22] ibid., pp. 8-10.
[23] Wood, pp. 128-129, 145, 168-169 (quoting *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)* Vol 259, pp. 292-295). See also N. M. Taylor, *The New Zealand People at War, The Home Front: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45*, Wellington, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1986, Volume I, pp. 314-322.
[24] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 80, Comments on the Far East Appreciation of Australian Chiefs of Staff, 27 February 1941, p. 3 (agreeing with Appendix A p. 3), NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

would instead be diverted to Fiji.[25] The Fiji force was eventually increased to two army brigades which became known as Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Pacific, and later 3 New Zealand Division.[26]

The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff prepared to assume responsibility for the defence of Fiji and Tonga for the duration of the war.[27] Construction of two airfields at Nadi and Nausori, near Suva, where land had been made available after the Pacific Defence Conference, was under way. In November 1940, the first RNZAF detachment for Fiji ("Unit 20"), equipped initially with four elderly de Havilland DH89 Dragon Rapides and one DH60 Moth biplane, had been sent out to provide reconnaissance and cover for shipping approaching Suva. These were the first New Zealand military aircraft to serve overseas since a Moth seaplane was taken to Samoa in 1930. In September 1941, Six Vickers Vincents were shipped to Fiji and on 8 October "Unit 20" became 4 General Reconnaissance Squadron. Later in November and December 1941, four Short Singapore III flying-boats would arrive from the RAF in Singapore and begin flying anti-submarine patrols as 5 General Reconnaissance Squadron based in Suva Harbour.[28] New Zealand even proposed that two or three United States Navy officer pilots might be attached to RNZAF flying boat and reconnaissance squadrons in Fiji and New Zealand for experience.[29]

In October 1941, a report by the government's military adviser, General Sir Guy Williams, stressed that because of the sheltered anchorage and refuelling facilities they offered, Fiji, Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tonga, and other islands would lie astride any Japanese attempt to penetrate southwards whether such attempt was confined to the passage of commerce raiders or took the form of an expedition for the invasion of New Zealand. The report envisaged the establishment of a coast-watching system, the development of flying-boat bases and landing strips,

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[25] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 37, 23 February 1940, Dispatch of a Brigade Group to Fiji NANZ EA1 81/4/3-2.

[26] O. A. Gillespie, *The Pacific: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45,* Wellington, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1952, pp. 22-42.

[27] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 103, 29 October 1941, and Paper 105, 9 November 1941, Defence of British Possessions in the South-West Pacific - Assumption of Responsibility by New Zealand. NANZ EA 1 81/4/3-3.

[28] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 70-75; and NANZ Air 118/32, Official History Narrative, "Works and Supply in the Forward Area", especially pp. 4-6, 9-30.

and air reconnaissance over the whole area, especially the gap between the New Hebrides and Fiji, and between Fiji and Tonga. Fiji, it emphasised, was not only the centre of Pacific cable and wireless communications but Suva and Laucala Bay were of "outstanding importance" because they provided facilities for the movement of very large naval forces such as the United States Pacific Fleet.[30] While Fiji was New Zealand's responsibility, Williams believed that in the event of active American participation in a war with Japan, the United States would accept responsibility for naval action east of Fiji and would also give support westward as far as the Solomon Islands. Local defence, however, would remain a British responsibility. Williams also argued that: "though they are outside the boundaries of the New Zealand Naval Station and come within the Australian sphere of responsibility, the Free French colonies of New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands and the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides are, from their position, of as much importance to the ultimate defence of New Zealand as they are to that of Australia."[31]

The American consul in Suva, Wainwright Abbott, reported to the Secretary of State that since William's visit to Fiji in July there had been a marked change in the outward appearance of Suva's waterfront and adjacent coastlines and in the activities of both the New Zealand forces stationed there and the Fiji Defence Force. Sir Guy had modified existing defence plans for Fiji and significantly speeded their implementation, and his recommendations were responsible for a material strengthening of the island's land and air forces. Abbott gained the impression that Sir Guy believed Fiji would be even more important strategically than New Zealand in the event of a Pacific war. Suva and Lautoka were defended by guns and defence forces, and although the air force's Vincents, close to Lautoka at Nadi, were "obsolete and slow", they were only considered a stop-gap measure until more modern aircraft arrived. Fiji was now considered relatively safe from invasion as it was only in the vicinity of these two ports that there were suitable entries through the barrier reef which was, in fact, the principal defence of the main island. The cost of defence

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[29] British Embassy in Washington to State Department, 17 September 1941, Acting Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal to State Department, 21 October 1941, NARA, R.G. 59, Box 5117, File 847h.248/10.

[30] General Sir Guy Williams, Appreciation of the Defence Requirements of New Zealand in the Event of War with Japan, Wellington, 1 October 1941, pp. 22, 28-35. RNZAF Archives Wigram S 27/9.

preparations was being shared by the Fiji and New Zealand governments, although, Abbott guessed, the present apportionment was perhaps not wholly satisfactory as the Fiji colonial treasurer and the New Zealand Forces brigadier had just hurriedly departed together for Wellington.[32]

Also in October, American officials discussed the question of establishing United States Army air bases in the Pacific with the British and Netherlands governments in London and the Australian government in Canberra. New Zealand was informed that after "considerable study" the War Department had reached the conclusion that it was imperative to national defence to establish immediately an air route between Hawaii and the Philippines suitable for the movement of heavy land-based bombers. The proposed route would embrace Palmyra, Canton, Tutuila, Fiji, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Rockhampton, Darwin, the Celebes or Ambon, Ceram, Davao and Manila so as to avoid the Japanese mandated islands in the Central Pacific. The route was expected to be of equal importance to the United States and to Australia and New Zealand.[33]

Alternative or supplementary bases were also envisaged at Christmas Island, the Solomon Islands, New Britain, Port Moresby and Tarakan. Bases constructed in the Solomon Islands and to the East would be dealt with by the commanding general in Hawaii, while those west of the Solomons would come under the commanding general of the United States Army forces in the Far East, General Douglas MacArthur, in Manila. Moreover these would be the channel of communication for Australian or New Zealand authorities. The United States War and Navy Departments had already established the feasibility of such a route and held informal discussions with the British Military Mission in Washington. Discussions had now reached a point where the various governments would be asked to agree in principle to the route, and to material co-operation within their respective territories. The United States hoped that the governments concerned would construct the bases in their respective territories,

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[31] ibid.. See also New Zealand Chiefs of Staff comments in Chiefs of Staff Paper 98, Defence of Fiji and Tonga, 15 August 1941, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

[32] American Consul Wainwright Abbott to State Department, 24 September 1941, NARA RG 59 Box 5116847H.20/43 PS/SBH.

[33] United States Minister to Australia, Nelson Johnson, to Cox, 18 October and 22 October 1941, NARA RG 84 Wellington Legation Confidential File Box 1.

but was willing to provide financial and technical assistance or, if necessary, to undertake the entire construction.[34]

Although none of the proposed bases lay within New Zealand territory, the Americans believed that New Zealand would have a definite interest in the project. It was also possible that the War Department might ultimately wish to establish a base in Western Samoa.[35] Fraser informed the American consul, Raymond E. Cox, that his government already knew of the discussions through its liaison officer with the British Mission in Washington, and had already intimated its complete concurrence with the proposals and willingness to assist. Fraser also reminded the American that while Western Samoa was the only territory that New Zealand had direct responsibility for, it was responsible for the defence of many of the British territories in the Pacific including Christmas Island and Fiji where the preparation of defences was already under way. New Zealand had also just undertaken a large road-building programme of its own for which a "considerable quantity" of machinery had been acquired of which there was still sufficient available for aerodrome construction in the islands. Airstrips on Western Samoa or Christmas Island, for example, could be constructed and ready for use within six to eight months, as could extensions at Fiji. Fraser confirmed that he was happy for these matters to be dealt with at the military level and told Cox that the Chief of Air Staff, Air Commodore Saunders, would be the appropriate New Zealand officer with whom to deal.[36]

The American authorities decided not to go ahead with defences on Western Samoa for the present because they felt that the only airfield site would take months to prepare. They too remained convinced, however, that Fiji was the most important location in the South Pacific. Fiji provided the best equipped and protected deep water harbour together with air facilities on the route between the United States, Honolulu and Panama on the one hand, and New Zealand, Australia, and the Malay Barrier on the other. While other possible harbours were considered such as Pago Pago, Apia, and Noumea, it was agreed that for geographical, strategical and physical reasons Fiji remained the most important. The loss of Fiji would deprive British, Dutch and American shipping of an important fuelling base. It would cut aircraft

[34] ibid.
[35] ibid.

reinforcements between the United States and the Malay Peninsula and greatly reduce the possibility of Allied action against the Marshall Islands. Its capture would greatly simplify Japanese action against Allied shipping and form a "most valuable advanced base" for an attack on New Zealand or even Australia.[37]

Related to this, Nash was preparing to submit to the government a proposal that Australia and New Zealand should agree to approach the United States about extending the Pan American air service to Australia by having a weekly service touch at Suva, Auckland, Sydney, and Noumea. Fraser was "not particularly smitten" with the idea of associating New Zealand in a proposal to invite further American interest, but was considering the matter. Cox was well aware of New Zealand's eagerness to help, especially regarding Christmas Island. As he told his friend John Minter at the American Legation in Canberra, two American Army officers had just arrived in Wellington via Sydney and Suva and received an "almost pathetically enthusiastic reception". They were welcomed at the airport by various dignitaries, before being received by the Prime Minister and entertained and questioned enthusiastically. Cox and Minter frequently exchanged information, but Cox was aware that if word got back from Canberra or Wellington that information given to them by Australian or New Zealand authorities was being passed on this could prove difficult. There was, he told Minter, "a lot of sensitiveness in these parts at being either ignored or over-ridden, and one has to be guided accordingly." [38]

When a report on the defence of Tahiti by a New Zealand army officer suggested supplying float-planes for reconnaissance and active operations, the New Zealand government had to reply that they were in no position to supply aircraft. On 20 October a message from the French High Commissioner for the Western Pacific requested details of any naval, military and air assistance to be given by New Zealand to French Oceania in the event of enemy action against the territory. The High Commissioner also requested that a New Zealand air unit be based at Tahiti as soon as possible. He too was informed that New Zealand was not in a position to offer such assistance and that supplies of suitable aircraft in the Far East were insufficient and

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[36] Fraser to Cox, 24 October 1941, NARA RG 84 Wellington Legation Confidential File Box 1.
[37] "Appreciation of Defence of Fiji", 8 January 1942, Fleet Admiral C. W. Nimitz Command Summary (Black Book), United States Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C., Book One 7 December 1941 - 31 August 1942 (2 Volumes), p. 160.

the distances from the nearest suitable bases on Fiji or Tonga were too great to allow air support to be sent, although if landing grounds, supplies and trained personnel were made available one flight of Vincents might be released for Tahiti.[39]

We should not allow the present outbreak of hostilities with Japan to contain us any more than is necessary.

(New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 8 December 1941)

On learning of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 8 December 1941, New Zealand's defence chiefs ordered the mobilisation of the army's territorial coastal fortress troops and recommended that the New Zealand forces on Fiji be brought up to full strength immediately. Despite the apparent magnitude of the Japanese threat and the rapidity of its expansion, reinforcements due to leave New Zealand for the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Middle East would still proceed, as long as adequate naval protection could be provided. This decision was based on the principle that New Zealand "should not allow the present outbreak of hostilities with Japan to contain us any more than is necessary." The situation would have to be reviewed, however, if an attack were made on Fiji which was "vital for the prosecution of war against Japan" both as first line of defence for New Zealand and, soon, as a landing grounds for aircraft flying from the United States to the Far East.[40]

War in the Pacific forced a drastic reorientation of plans and a heavy increase in commitments for the air force that was now charged with the problem of home defence while still maintaining the flow of trained personnel overseas. At this time the RNZAF comprised some 16,000 personnel (1,582 officers, 13,062 airmen and 1,269 airwomen) of whom 10,577 were on duty in New Zealand; 1,128 were in Canada attached to the Royal Canadian Air Force under the Empire Air Training Scheme, 593 were in the Pacific (mainly in Fiji), and 3,615 were attached to the RAF. Approximately 641 largely obsolete aircraft equipped the RNZAF in New Zealand and Fiji, of which the most important were 36 Hudsons, 48 Vincents, 26 Vildebeestes,

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[38] Cox to John Minter, 3 November 1941, NARA RG 84 Wellington Legation Confidential File Box 1.
[39] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 102, The Defence of French Oceania, 29 October 1941, pp. 2-4, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3. Also "Minutes of discussion between Chiefs of Staff and Captain Auboyneau of the Free French Cruiser *Le Triomphant*" 6 November 1941, pp. 1-3, NANZ EA 1 81/4/2a-2.
[40] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 108, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan - Immediate Action Required, 8 December 1941, pp. 2-3; and Paper 109, Defence of Fiji - Appreciation of the Situation, 20 December 1941, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

2 Singapore III Flying-boats, 46 Hinds, 30 Gordons, 62 Harvards, 143 Oxfords and 221 Tiger Moths. There were only five operational squadrons (three in New Zealand and two in Fiji).[41]

Intermittent patrols and escort services for the navy were ordered and the Governor General issued a prohibition on all civil flying (except scheduled airline services) which was not lifted until December 1945. On 9 December 1941, five Hudsons were flown up to Fiji as reinforcements for 4 Squadron (one returned to New Zealand) with another five Hudsons flown up from New Zealand three weeks later to maintain reconnaissance along the Fiji - Tonga - New Hebrides route. The Chiefs of Staff recommended that a fighter squadron should also be sent for army support and to work with radar equipment in Fiji whose requirements, they argued, should be given precedence over New Zealand's for the detection of enemy aircraft. For the first time, the question of material aid from the United States arose. Formerly the defence of Fiji had been considered important for the defence of the Dominion and other British interests in the South Pacific. Now, however, the additional measures being taken were "essential for the maintenance of the general strategic situation in the Far East and must be regarded largely as an American commitment". It would therefore be reasonable, the chiefs argued, to suggest that the Government of the United States should contribute to the cost, and this would be "mainly by the provision of material for the measures now being taken."[42]

Churchill, who was then in Washington, was asked to impress upon Roosevelt the extreme importance of Fiji and the need to provide equipment for its defence, "not solely or even primarily as an outpost of the defence of New Zealand, but as an essential link with the United States in the general Allied scheme of operations in the Pacific and the Far East".[43] Yet, despite the urgency of protecting Fiji, the RNZAF's primary task remained the training of aircrew for the RAF. Even now it was desired that there should be as little interference as possible with the Air Training Scheme as a

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[41] D. Duxbury, "Fifty Years of the RNZAF - A Chronology" *New Zealand Wings*, April 1987, p. 42.
[42] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 109, Defence of Fiji - Appreciation of the Situation, 20 December 1941, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3, p. 5.
[43] NANZ Air 118/32, pp. 34-35.

steady flow of air crews to the "vital theatres of warfare" was considered essential to secure final victory.[44]

On 13 December 1941, Air Commodore Victor Goddard was appointed New Zealand's new Chief of Air Staff. An experienced RAF officer, Goddard has been described as being a very astute administrator and a great asset to New Zealand's developing air force.[45] After entering the Royal Navy as a cadet in January 1910, Goddard had joined the Grand Fleet four years later and been invited by the captain of the ship on which he was serving to volunteer "for special temporary service of a secret and hazardous nature". Goddard found himself being trained as an airship pilot and spent most of the rest of the war as an airship pilot on anti-submarine duties. From June to November 1916, he was attached to the Royal Flying Corps for night flying duties and in this role took part in the Battle of the Somme. Following the war, he was granted a permanent commission in the RAF and among other positions served as Deputy Director of Intelligence at the Air Ministry from 1938-1939. From 1939-1940 he served at the Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force in France and then until 1941 as the Director of Military Co-operation at the Air Ministry, from where he was posted to New Zealand.[46]

Goddard immediately argued that the most important thing was for New Zealand to maintain its force of Hudsons, because too much concentration on fighter defence would result in "a reduction of reconnaissance and striking power and a reduction of New Zealand's contribution to the Empire Air Forces". Although it was reassuring to see fighters in the air or in readiness on the ground, it was important to remember, he warned, that "the possession of fighters in the Islands at the present time, however comforting to the uninstructed, would be unsound tactically and probably entirely ineffective". It was still considered that any serious attack on New Zealand must be sea-borne and whereas bombers could sink ships, Goddard argued, fighters could not. "The destruction of a few raiding aircraft would not be such an efficient deterrent to enemy attack as the capacity for disabling or sinking ships."

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[44] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 108, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan - Immediate action required, 8 December 1941, pp. 5-6 and Paper 109, Defence of Fiji - Appreciation of the Situation, 20 December 1941, p. 3., NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

[45] N. Holmes, *To Fly a Desk: Sir Geoffrey Roberts, Father of Air New Zealand*, Auckland, Reed, 1982, pp. 53-54.

Moreover, New Zealand had no adequate radio detection system to lead fighters onto a target, but because of its speed and gun armament the Hudson, Goddard suggested optimistically, was hoped to be "a match for any ship-borne aircraft in combat."[47]

At the end of December 1941, New Zealand again asked Britain to supply more aircraft, especially medium bombers and long-range fighters for defence. The Air Ministry offered to release 142 Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk fighters which were destined for the Middle East to be divided between Australia and New Zealand. Australia was to receive 124 of these and New Zealand would receive 18, with the further intention that the United States should be requested to supply 18 also. New Zealand felt strongly that this disparity in numbers was "quite unsatisfactory" and was based on the numbers requested by the two countries rather than their relative needs, especially as substantial American fighter reinforcements were already located in Australia. Fraser reminded Churchill that if Fiji or New Caledonia fell into Japanese hands, not only would New Zealand be seriously threatened with invasion, but the American reinforcement route to Australia would have to go through New Zealand. "In the circumstances", he urged Churchill, "it is in my opinion essential to provide substantial fighter defences in New Zealand." New Zealand continued to request torpedo-bomber or medium bomber squadrons as well as transport aircraft. By early 1942, however, the RNZAF still only had a total first-line aircraft strength of 32 Hudsons and 39 obsolete Vincents.[48]

We are by no means happy with the arrangements so far as we know them for the conduct of the war against Japan.

(Peter Fraser, January 1942)

According to Samuel Eliot Morison's *History of United States Naval Operations*, America's Navy Chief, Admiral Ernest J. King, dismissed ideas of letting Australia and New Zealand fall into Japanese hands early in the war saying: "we cannot in honor let Australia and New Zealand down. They are our brothers, and we

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[46] J. Linneman "Victor Goddard - Taps" in *Over the Front*, Volume 3, Number 3, Autumn 1988, pp. 283-284.

[47] Report on RNZAF Preparations on Outbreak of War with Japan, 15 December 1942, "Fighter Defence Fallacy", pp. 3-4, NANZ Air 1 102/10/5.

[48] Fraser to Churchill, 4 February 1942, *Documents,* Vol. III, pp. 220-222. See also Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 108-109. Ross suggests that the Kittyhawk allocations were made after consultation between Australia and New Zealand, but this does not appear to have been the case.

must not let them be overrun by Japan."[49] In a memo to Roosevelt, King also confided that because Australia and New Zealand were "white men's countries", it was essential that America should not allow them to be conquered by Japan "because of the repercussions among the non-white races of the world." American priorities, he argued, should be firstly to hold Hawaii and its approaches, especially Midway, and maintain its communications to America's west coast, then to support Australasia, and then to drive north-westwards against Japan's forces from the New Hebrides.[50]

The Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee argued that while a Japanese invasion of Australia and New Zealand would add prestige and some economic benefits, the hazards would outweigh the prize. The capture of the two countries would eliminate them from the Allied war effort, eliminate them as a possible bridgehead for Allied counter-attack, and add some natural resources such as land, iron and wool. However, the two countries were isolated and sparsely inhabited, possessed poor internal communications and had coastlines too long to be adequately defended. Japan would be over-extended, the size of the occupation forces needed would be disproportionate to the advantages gained, the "resistance of white people in their homeland would be more determined than any yet encountered", and the operation would invite the United States and Russia to attack their flank and rear. Instead, Japan's main aim, they argued, would probably be to neutralise or occupy key points in Northern Australia and isolate the two countries from the United States.[51]

Despite efforts to strengthen home defence and the protection of the Pacific Islands, New Zealand's own security was not guaranteed until the United States took responsibility for the Pacific theatre in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. What New Zealand historian Malcolm McKinnon has called "a coincidence of American and New Zealand strategic interests" came about.[52] Long established American plans for war with Japan, the Orange Plans, had anticipated a

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[49] S. E. Morison (ed.) *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1947-1962, Volume IV, p. 246.

[50] King to Roosevelt, 5 March 1942, Papers of Fleet Admiral King, Series I, Box 2, United States Navy Historical Centre.

[51] Combined Staff Planners (C.P.S.) Paper 10, 13 February 1942, and Notes on Combined Chiefs of Staff 18/1, Possible Japanese action against Australia and New Zealand, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 396, File ABC 384. On Japanese plans see J. B. Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign: Pacific Fleet Strategy December 1941-June 1942*, Annapolis, Md., Naval Institute Press, 1976, p. 45.

[52] M. McKinnon, *Independence and Foreign Policy: New Zealand in the World Since 1935*, Auckland University Press, 1993, p. 45.

campaign based on Hawaii across the Central Pacific. With the attack on their fleet at Pearl Harbor frustrating this for the immediate future, the main American objective became to organise the various forces in the theatre to meet the Japanese thrust southwards. An Anglo-American staff conference in March 1941, had already agreed that war in the Pacific would be avoided if possible, but if it came then it would be subordinated to the war in Europe. Now, at the ARCADIA Conference in Washington from 22 December 1941 to 14 January 1942, the American and British Chiefs of Staff reconfirmed their 'Germany first' policy. Australia and New Zealand were not present at this conference but, like the Dutch government in exile in London, were represented by the British who wanted to speak on behalf of the Commonwealth and the Dutch, and to keep American attention firmly fixed on Britain and Europe rather than be distracted by the Pacific.[53]

New Zealand remained dissatisfied with these arrangements. In a long cable on 12 January 1942, Fraser wrote to Churchill that New Zealand had always considered the problem of the war from the widest point of view, and had recognised that the critical theatre of the war had, at least up until now, been Europe. However, he continued, using his greatest powers of circumlocution:

> to be completely frank, we have not always felt that the potential problems of the Pacific have had the importance attached to them in London which we, more intimately concerned therewith, have considered that they have perhaps deserved. Whether this be so or not, it seems essential that the position in the Pacific should be treated now as of at least equal importance to that in Europe and in the Middle East.[54]

Fraser went on to express his disappointment at the failure to set up a unified command for the whole of the Pacific area which would prevent the Allied commands being defeated piecemeal. When the war had been principally in Europe, New Zealand had been "content very largely to abide by the decisions of the British Government and the British Chiefs of Staff." Now that it had moved so much closer, however, New Zealand felt that matters under discussion were of "immediate and direct concern" and there should therefore be "some method devised by which we can

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[53] H. P. Willmot, *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategy to April 1942,* Annapolis, Md., Naval Institute Press, 1982, pp. 255-256, 261-264.

intelligently form and explicitly express our views before action is taken." As far as the defence of New Zealand went, the British and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff had long maintained that there was "no immediate large-scale threat to the territory of Australia and much less of New Zealand." Yet Fraser was not convinced. "Frankly," he argued, "we do not accept this, and, even if we did accept it, prudence and the demands of our own people would oblige us to prepare against the worst." The problem, he concluded, was that New Zealand had very little knowledge of the intentions of those responsible for the higher direction of the war, especially the Americans. "We feel we must have an eye, an ear and a voice wherever decisions affecting New Zealand are being made and we are by no means happy with the arrangements so far as we know them for the conduct of the war against Japan."[55]

In a remarkably calm report on national defence "with particular regard to civil emergency precautions" at the beginning of 1942, New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff reminded the government that the menace of hostile action against the country had existed since the outbreak of war against Germany in 1939, but had been of "a relatively minor character" until Japan entered the war. The new situation could cause a radical change in New Zealand's defence needs, yet they advised a sensible approach because the adoption of a defensive policy was liable to lead to dissipation of resources in all directions and to a weakening of the capacity for decisive offensive action in any given theatre of operations. The success of the British Empire had depended so far on secure resources, secure bases and secure lines of communication, all of which depended on sea power. Although as yet unproven in battle, the chiefs argued that the potential strength of the British, American and Dutch navies combined posed a serious threat to the Japanese fleet that Japan could not fail to be aware of. Japan's principal material requirements were oil, rubber, tin, nickel, coal, iron and rice, all of which were available from the territories of South-East Asia. Japan required quick and decisive results to secure these resources to enable it to exploit China and to develop the "New Order in the East", yet none of these resources was economically available to Japan from New Zealand.[56]

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[54] Fraser to Churchill, 12 January 1942, cited in Wood, p. 217.
[55] Wood, pp. 218-220.
[56] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper No. 115, Memorandum on Defence with Particular Regard to Civil Emergency Precautions, 10 January 1942, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3, pp. 1-2.

The chiefs continued that it was clear that New Zealand was not included in Japan's quest for resources and moreover was not a menace to Japan's sea power. It followed, therefore, that Japan would not undertake the invasion of New Zealand until it had secured the territories containing the necessary resources and unless Allied naval power in the Pacific and Allied power of reinforcing forces in the Far East was destroyed. It also followed that should Allied naval power be defeated, then Japan would seek to cut lines of communication across the Pacific, especially the American line of air reinforcement to the Far East through Fiji, putting Japan dangerously close to New Zealand and Australia. Until this happened, however, New Zealand had little to fear outside minor raids against ports and shipping by cruisers or at the very most one or two aircraft carriers. New Zealand's army, air force and civil defence bodies would be augmented and prepared, yet the Dominion's role remained "to maintain her general war effort, while, at the same time, greatly improving her capacity to withstand all attacks which Japan may be capable of delivering against her."[57]

The United States Navy assessment of the situation was that while attacks by surface and submarine raiders must be expected, the invasion of New Zealand was "improbable at the moment". However, the possibility would become greater if the Japanese continued to be successful. To Rear-Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander of the United States Pacific Fleet, there appeared to be two distinct possibilities. The first was to "gamble all upon securing Australia as a base of future operations against the enemy, and leave our Pacific area open to attack" or to "protect our own vital territory and communications while doing what we can in bold operations against the enemy's flank". Hardly surprisingly, Nimitz favoured the second of the two options.[58]

The American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) command was established under General Sir Archibald Wavell, to include Burma, part of North-West Australia and most of South-East Asia. Alongside ABDA was the Pacific Ocean Area which was north of Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Australia and New Zealand were included in neither command, but after lobbying by both governments the ANZAC area was set up on 27 January 1942. Under United States Navy command, this was to include

[57] ibid., pp. 3-5, 14.
[58] Nimitz Command Summary, Book One, pp. 173, 233.

Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, the Solomons, New Hebrides and New Caledonia. ABDA proved to be short-lived as its area was quickly over-run by Japanese forces. At this stage of the conflict, events were moving so rapidly that the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs complained to the Australian and New Zealand Prime Ministers that any report drafted in the morning was likely to be out of date by the afternoon. The Japanese had deeply shocked the Commonwealth by sinking the Royal Navy's *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* only days after Pearl Harbor, and now their occupation of the Malay Peninsula, and especially their incredible capture of Singapore on 15 February, drove a great wedge between the British in the Indian Ocean and the Americans in the Pacific. The situation Churchill had warned of in June 1940 had come about and command in the Pacific now rested unequivocally with the Americans.[59]

Not one single aircraft suitable either for reconnaissance or for attack against a raider.

(Peter Fraser, December 1940)

At this stage, there were effectively no modern combat aircraft in New Zealand and emergency steps were being taken to arm obsolete training types for local defence. Despite the defence chiefs' assessment of the likely risk, Fraser cabled Churchill in January 1942 to warn him that without fighter protection for Auckland and Wellington "the government might have to face serious repercussions in the morale of the public." The German surface raiders had already shown how exposed New Zealand was without the 30 Wellington bombers that had been donated to Britain in 1939. Older reconnaissance aircraft had been sent out but had been unable to locate the raiders. The air force, Fraser had previously warned Churchill, possessed "not one single aircraft suitable either for reconnaissance or for attack against a raider."[60] In the meantime, aerodromes were camouflaged and the construction of modern facilities to accommodate American aircraft was begun. The three recently-formed territorial squadrons at Auckland, Wellington (now moved to Blenheim) and

[59] Willmott, p. 387. On New Zealand and the ABDA and ANZAC commands see the Official History Narrative "The Defence of the Pacific 1942", NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 2-12.
[60] Fraser to Churchill, 4 December 1940, *Documents,* Vol. III, pp. 214-215, also Wood, pp. 210, 214-215.

Christchurch were mobilised for reconnaissance patrols around New Zealand's coastline.

On 4 February 1942, New Zealand was informed that the United States was considering assisting New Zealand with the local defence of Fiji by providing equipment and air defences for them. The United States would also be furnishing forces for New Caledonia, while New Zealand and Australia would be "invited to afford all possible supplies to such United States forces as might be assigned to assist in the defence of New Caledonia and Fiji."[61] However, New Zealand continued to request fighter aircraft and complete squadrons from Britain. "We still require the 36 fighter aircraft asked for in December", Fraser reminded Churchill. In addition, New Zealand hoped for at least four fighter squadrons as soon as possible, complete with personnel and all ancillary equipment, together with a Group Headquarters staff and the requisite anti-aircraft defences to enable the whole formation to operate satisfactorily. If the 36 aircraft were provided, then the RNZAF would be in a position to maintain the pilot strength of the four squadrons supplied. At present, Fraser continued, "we have neither the aircraft nor the training facilities to provide any fighter defence whatsoever, except by employing training aircraft which have neither the equipment nor the performance adequate to deal with modern enemy aircraft."[62]

These reinforcements represented only a small part of the forces needed to defend New Zealand and Fraser hoped that that the whole question would be discussed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff along with the overall defence of the ABDA area. The defence of New Zealand depended "upon the ability of Great Britain and the United States jointly to provide both equipment and units of all kinds". Churchill replied that he was in "full sympathy and agreement" with New Zealand's wishes, and would do what he could to see that the 36 fighters requested were provided either from British or British and American sources, along with some anti-aircraft equipment and possibly a small number of long-range fighters. However, the provision of four complete British fighter squadrons would be extremely difficult in shipping alone, and New Zealand would be better to request that the United States dispatch complete pursuit squadrons to New Zealand instead. Britain was even

[61] Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (SSDA) to New Zealand Prime Minister, 4 February 1942, NANZ EA1 86/1/10.

prepared to agree that the two American fighter squadrons about to be despatched to Northern Ireland be diverted to New Zealand.[63]

On 18 February, the Combined Chiefs of Staff discussed the air defence of New Zealand and Fiji. It was recognised that New Zealand had reduced its own defences because of its responsibility for the defence of Fiji and that New Zealand did not have sufficient aircraft to meet the defence requirements of both countries. American assistance would be needed if the greatly increased threat to each was to be met. The chiefs were agreed on the importance of Fiji and on the need for fighter, flying-boat and especially bomber-reconnaissance squadrons, but because of the American air forces expansion programme it was not possible to send United States bomber-reconnaissance units. Furthermore, while New Zealand had offered to supply air force personnel, the only way American aircraft could be supplied would be at the expense of Europe or the Middle East. It was recommended, therefore, that additional air forces for the defence of Fiji and New Zealand should be supplied as soon as it was practicable, but Fiji was to have precedence. In the meantime, New Zealand should continue to be supplied aircraft from British allocations.[64]

When the first American fighter squadron had arrived in Fiji towards the end of January, pooling of New Zealand and American air force workshop facilities had been quickly arranged. Initially this was an ad hoc arrangement, but on 19 February New Zealand suggested that the United States should provide fuel and supplies while New Zealand would provide all foodstuffs. Items required by either service, New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff suggested, should be demanded from the "best and quickest source of supply - either American or New Zealand". On 1 March, the United States Army Air Corps Command in Honolulu concurred and this informal policy was maintained until the two governments signed a lend-lease agreement in September.[65]

Nash cabled the Prime Minister from Washington on 7 March, to ask for the latest defence appreciation and equipment requirements from New Zealand to place before the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Fraser replied that New Zealand's immediate priority should be the preparation of facilities at Auckland and Suva for the United

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[62] Fraser to Churchill, 4 February 1942, *Documents,* Vol. III, pp. 220-222.
[63] Churchill to Fraser, 14 February 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 222-223.
[64] Joint Planning Staff (J.P.S.) 13, 13 February 1942, and C.C.S. 45, 18 February 1942, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 358, File ABC 381 Pacific Bases Section 1.

States Pacific Fleet which would be the "most effective insurance against invasion" and the mainstay of New Zealand's subsequent offensive "for which we should start to prepare now". New Zealand's defence should now be based on naval forces with adequate air support to intercept any enemy expedition before it reaches New Zealand. Until then, however, and "until naval and air situations develop materially in our favour," New Zealand's land defence would depend on the army which would require at least six reinforced divisions as well as artillery, tank battalions, and anti-aircraft batteries. Another division along with artillery and anti-aircraft batteries would also be required for the defence of Fiji.[66]

As for the air force, New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff reported that it was not possible to make a satisfactory statement of immediate or even ultimate air requirements for the defence of New Zealand and Fiji without knowledge of the equipment being made available and of the strategic intentions for the area. So far, they had been requested to prepare for the reception in New Zealand of 200 heavy bombers, and possibly another 400 naval aircraft, and this would require large quantities of aerodrome construction equipment. In addition, they reported, if Fiji and New Zealand were to be held and to become important base areas in future offensive operations, they could require up to 50 squadrons. These would have to be made up of flying-boats, torpedo and dive bombers, long range bombers, fighters and transport aircraft as well as headquarters establishments, maintenance depots, schools and aircraft assembly plants.[67]

In the meantime, New Zealand was prepared to operate any number of squadrons that could be sent within the next three months and was even prepared to disrupt the Empire Air Training Organisation "to any extent required" to accommodate operational squadrons. In case of emergency, New Zealand was prepared to put into action Vincents, Oxfords, Harvards and Moths armed to fight and bomb, even though recent experience had shown that the use of these would be suicidal against such strong modern aircraft as the Japanese were known to have. The

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[65] NANZ Air 118/32, pp. 39-41.

[66] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper No. 125, 12 March 1942, Appreciation of Defence of New Zealand and Estimate of Requirements for New Zealand and Fiji, Appendix A, Nash to Prime Minister, 7 March 1942 and Appendix B, Prime Minister to Nash, 14 March 1942, pp. 1-3, NANZ EA1 85/1/1 pt. 2.

[67] ibid., Appendix B, Prime Minister to Nash, 14 March 1942, pp. 7-12.

chiefs would prefer to see New Zealand "powerfully equipped" with air forces as soon as the Combined Chiefs of Staff or a Supreme Commander could organise it.[68] The Air Ministry was prepared to recommend aircraft numbers that might be needed, but had to inform the New Zealand Government that shipping alone prevented the dispatch of squadrons from Britain. Furthermore, Indian demands on Middle East supplies precluded any assistance from that theatre. The only possibility of early help would be in the form of complete United States squadrons and Whitehall officials were already representing New Zealand's needs to Washington. So far, Wellington was told, the United States had given no undertaking that they would do so "but we have not lost hope. First help is of course to Pacific islands which are key to New Zealand's security against invasion."[69]

The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff had argued that the scale of attack on New Zealand was dependent on the capabilities of the RNZAF, as well as Allied naval power in the South Pacific, the Japanese estimate of New Zealand's value to the Allies and the overall strategic direction of the Axis powers. Nash pointed out, for example, that New Zealand's value as a base could not be overestimated, both as an Allied base in the South Pacific, and as an ideal base for a Japanese attack on Australia. Furthermore, the loss of New Zealand meat, wool and dairy exports would "critically affect the food supply of Great Britain, and the United Nations forces overseas". He also argued that if the Japanese knew about the limited extent of New Zealand's aircraft and anti-aircraft resources "it would probably be an incitement to attack".[70]

New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff also denied that the capture of New Caledonia or Fiji were essential preludes to an invasion of New Zealand and were, they told the American planning staff, preparing to meet a force of one or two divisions supported by strong naval and air forces. The United States Chiefs of Staff remained of the opinion, however, that while Japan might launch a major attack against Australia, it was more likely to launch its major effort on the Asian continent through Burma towards India. At the same time, there might be a minor invasion of key points in Northern Australia, but any attack against New Zealand would only come after the

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[68] ibid.

[69] Air Ministry to Air Headquarters Wellington, 12 March 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/1/1.

[70] Nash to Harry Hopkins, 26 March 1942, NARA R.G. 218, Box 518, File CCS 660.2 Defence of Australia and New Zealand Section 1.

successful invasion and occupation of this area. A United States division was tentatively allocated for the defence of New Zealand and it was thought that, on top of the New Zealand forces already available there, this would be sufficient. No further American commitment could be made, except at the expense of other areas, so it was recommended that "no further plans be made at present to dispatch additional units for the defence of New Zealand".[71]

Churchill informed Fraser that President Roosevelt had agreed with his estimate of the importance of the Middle East and the impossibility of the shipping situation, and offered American troops to be sent to Australia and New Zealand so that the Australian and New Zealand divisions could remain there. Fraser replied that even though he had not asked for the return of the New Zealand division, news that Australian troops were returning put him in an awkward position. There was a growing feeling that the proper place for the New Zealanders now that their country was in danger was back in the Pacific and, now that the strain on New Zealand's manpower was beginning to show, it might be difficult to reinforce the division in the Middle East. Furthermore, the scale of reinforcement being offered by Roosevelt seemed to Fraser to be patently insufficient and the fully trained and battle-experienced New Zealanders would be of "infinitely greater value".[72]

Although this was hardly an enthusiastic acceptance of Roosevelt's offer, Churchill was pleased that New Zealand had not pressed for the return of its division. Fraser, however, felt that the British were still gravely underestimating the extent of the threat to Australia and New Zealand and continued to urge greater support. Churchill could only reply that he was doing the best he could to send forces wherever they were needed. The situation was critical in India, the Middle East and in Europe, but "of course if you or Australia were actually invaded in force we should come to your aid at all costs". Although an American commander would be in charge of all operations in the Pacific, the United Kingdom Government did not regard this as absolving them

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[71] Notes for C.P.S. 9th Meeting, discussion on C.P.S. 24/1, 19 March 1942, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 358, File ABC 381 Pacific Bases Section 1.

[72] Churchill to Fraser, 10 March 1942; Fraser to Churchill, 15 March 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 151-155.

> from their determination and duty to come to your aid to the best of their ability and if you are actually invaded in force ... we shall do our utmost to divert British troops and British ships rounding the Cape or already in the Indian Ocean to your succour, albeit at the expense of India and the Middle East.[73]

As for air forces, Britain regretted that existing units could not be transferred to New Zealand from other theatres. It would, therefore, be necessary for the required units to be formed in New Zealand from aircraft allotted from time to time by the Munitions Assignment Board which had now started to function in London and Washington. Britain was short of most suitable aircraft types, American production and supplies were largely in arrears, and the totals on which Britain was depending had been cut since United States entry into the war. However, the Air Ministry would do its best to supply key personnel to assist in the manning of New Zealand squadrons.[74]

When Britain asked for American help in supplying aircraft for Australia and New Zealand, General George C. Marshall, the United States Chief of Staff, informed the British Chiefs of Staff on 10 March that there appeared to be no question that a real need existed for pursuit (fighter) squadrons in New Zealand and Fiji. Marshall had been investigating New Zealand's requests for assistance, but found that other requirements of higher priority rendered it impossible to furnish these squadrons from the United States. Nor did it seem advisable to him to divert any of the United States units in the Australia-ABDA area because of the seriousness of the threat there. The British Chiefs had asked the United States to supply 199 Kittyhawks to the Dominions in addition to the 80 previously diverted from ABDA assignments for the defence of North-east Australia. Marshall noted that the British had promised to send planes for two squadrons to New Zealand and that these could be manned by pilots in Australia for whom there were insufficient aircraft. Alternatively, aircraft already allocated to Britain could be sent directly from the United States to New Zealand.[75]

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[73] Churchill to Fraser, 17 March 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 151-155, 175-180.
[74] SSDA to Fraser, 31 March 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 151-155, 175-180.
[75] Marshall to British Chiefs of Staff, 11 March 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 163-167. Also Combined Chiefs of Staff Papers 30, 5 February 1942, CCS 30/1, 10 February 1942, CCS 49, 23 February 1942, and CCS 30/2, 6 April 1942, NARA R.G. 218, Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Decimal File 1942-1945, Box 168.

The American Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed that Britain furnish 16 medium bombers for New Zealand, make every effort to provide New Zealand with 36 fighters and as soon as practical supply aircraft for at least four medium bomber reconnaissance squadrons. This was turned down by the British planners who did not feel their commitments would allow such diversions. A decision on Australian and New Zealand requests was postponed and the Americans recommended that a thorough review of all Allied aircraft requirements and production be conducted so that an overall plan could be made, rather than continue with a policy of "piece-meal diversions". Lieutenant-General Henry H. Arnold, head of the United States Army Air Forces, explained that United States production of pursuit aircraft was at its lowest ebb, but he expected it to increase from now on.[76]

The British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs informed New Zealand that while Britain agreed in principle to supplying aircraft from its American allotments, this could not be done as they were urgently required for the Middle East and India where the shortage was now becoming desperate. Moreover, Goddard informed the government that New Zealand already had sufficient pilots from its schools and the squadron returning from South-East Asia, and these were likely to be of a higher standard than the American pilots in Australia who were not yet operationally trained. Goddard believed that American aircraft originally intended for the ABDA area, but now being sent to Australia, should be a possible source for the RNZAF. Although aircraft were still needed for the defence of Australia, he argued, it did not follow that Australia should have complete priority. A Japanese move against Australia could still come via New Caledonia, Fiji and New Zealand thus cutting Australia off from American supplies. The protection of New Zealand, Goddard urged, and Fraser obviously agreed, remained vital to the whole war in the South Pacific.[77]

After the apparent protection offered by a British fleet at the Singapore Naval Base, the other major theme in pre-war defence discussions about the Pacific had

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[76] G. P. Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II, The War Against Japan*, Annapolis, Md., United States Naval Institute Press, 1982, pp. 106-107. Also W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate *The Army Air Forces in World War II, (Volume IV) The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1950, especially pp. 16-18, and Lundstrom, pp. 135-136.

continually been the importance of Fiji as an essential part of the defence of New Zealand. As British and American power was swept away from Asia and the Pacific by the Japanese, the New Zealand War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee again stressed the importance of Fiji. They advised the government that the invasion of New Zealand itself was "extremely unlikely as long as we hold the Australian mainland and can operate adequate naval and air forces from the South Pacific Islands although raiding operations against shipping and shore installations in New Zealand are possible." The Chiefs of Staff warned that the scale and probability of attack against New Zealand depended on "whether we can continue to operate adequate naval and air forces from New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa and to deny these islands to the Japanese." These islands would necessarily lie across the American route to Australia and New Zealand.[78]

If Japanese operations in the Netherlands East Indies were successful, the chiefs argued, an attack on the South Pacific islands would become almost a certainty and New Zealand would then be so isolated from its allies that an invasion would not even be necessary. An attack on New Zealand would entail serious dispersal of Japanese forces, while the United States fleet still operated and more important damage could be done to the Allies in the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, New Zealand would be a "powerful bargaining counter in any future negotiations." On balance, the Chiefs of Staff considered that Japan was more likely initially to direct any major offensive action to the west and north rather than to attempt an invasion of New Zealand and Australia. For the air defence of New Zealand, facilities were to be provided for the operation of American heavy bomber squadrons, while the chiefs recommended that the RNZAF should consist of its existing five squadrons augmented by four fighter squadron, two torpedo or medium bomber squadrons, one general reconnaissance squadron, one bomber reconnaissance or dive-bomber squadron and four transport aircraft. This was obviously more than could be provided from British sources at the time.[79]

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[77] SSDA to Fraser, 31 March 1942, Goddard to Jones, 21 March 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 163-167.

[78] New Zealand War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee, New Zealand Defence Plan, 18 March 1942, pp. 1-2, 14 -16, RNZAF Archives Wigram S 27/9. Also Chiefs of Staff Paper 115, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

[79] New Zealand Defence Plan, pp. 1-2, 14-16.

During discussions on the strategic responsibilities of Britain and the United States at the fourteenth meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 31 March 1942, Britain's senior representative in Washington, General Sir John Dill, argued that as the defence of New Zealand would rest primarily on sea and air power, it would be an unwise diversion of manpower to build up strong land forces there. Instead, he argued, the country should come under the direct command of the naval commander of the Pacific. Admiral King agreed and commented that he had already pointed out to Walter Nash the relative security enjoyed by New Zealand as long as the line of communication between Hawaii and Australia remained intact.[80] When Nash had written to King saying that he and Fraser thought high-ranking American officers should be sent as soon as possible "so that preparations for the main forces may be advanced and plans coordinated", King sent the letter on to the other Chiefs of Staff with a note suggesting that the New Zealanders did not understand the situation and were having "delusions of grandeur".[81]

By April, the construction of bases and facilities along the South Pacific ferry route would be far enough advanced to allow a limited supply of badly-needed equipment to be ferried to the South-West Pacific. The increasing importance of Fiji for this route between Hawaii and Australia encouraged the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review its defence and recommendations were sought from Britain and New Zealand. New Zealand was agreeable to its army and air units remaining there, but hoped major naval and military reinforcements would be sent from the United States. Britain agreed to American military control of Fiji and suggested that any disagreements between the Governor of Fiji and the United States commander could be referred to the New Zealand government rather than go through the United Kingdom. The United States made plans for army and air reinforcements and a joint staff planning committee recommended that Fiji be reinforced by New Zealand while an American army division and Marine Corps division were established in New Zealand. The committee also recommended that the Munitions Assignment Board in Washington

[80] Minutes of 14th Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 31 March 1942, NARA, R.G. 165, Entry 421 Box 176, File ABC 323.31 Pacific Ocean Area.
[81] Nash to King, 25 March 1942, Papers of Ernest J. King, Box 14, United States Library of Congress Manuscripts Division, Washington D.C..

supply aircraft from British Commonwealth or United States sources to the RNZAF for the defence of Fiji and New Zealand.[82]

While still wishing to retain their strong position with the British government, Australia and New Zealand had campaigned strenuously since the outbreak of war in the Pacific for direct representation with the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington rather than through London. Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs had argued that this would be an "altogether unwieldy" solution, but agreed to consult the Dominions whenever their interests were concerned. The Americans evidently hoped that concerns of the smaller Pacific powers would be "sifted" in London and then some coherent and preferably practicable suggestions passed on to Washington. New Zealand was now informed that the Pacific was to be split up between the United States Army and Navy, and a Pacific War Council was be set up in Washington.[83]

General Marshall pointed out to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the Pacific War Council as proposed by the United States would still retain the power of veto and could nullify any action proposed by the chiefs by a withdrawal of their forces. He considered this somewhat theoretical, however, since the geography of the South-West Pacific, coupled with enemy aggressiveness, made actual withdrawal of forces a practical impossibility. The attitudes of the Australian and New Zealand governments, he told the Joint Chiefs, "may have been considerably influenced by the failures of some previous defences such as those in Crete and Egypt in which they felt that their desires had not been given sufficient consideration".[84] Despite early high expectations, however, the Pacific War Council in Washington, along with the parallel Far Eastern Council in London, evolved into little more than a clearing house for information and a forum for airing grievances. One participant called it "a press conference at the highest level". There was no fulfilment of the "naïve hope" that some institution such as the council would give small countries a more effective voice than they currently possessed. Both councils met regularly until late 1943, but there is

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[82] NANZ Air 118/32, pp. 42-46. See also Joint United States Staff Planners J.P.S. 21/8 (draft), 30 April 1942, NARA R.G. 218, Box 518, File Defence of Australia and New Zealand Section 1. On the South Pacific especially the air ferry route see Craven & Cate, Volume I, pp. 428-438.

[83] NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 32-33; and Wood, pp. 219-221.

[84] Minutes of Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 23 March 1942, NARA, R.G. 218, Box 194, C.C.S. 334 Joint Chiefs of Staff Meetings.

little evidence that what was said at either played much part in influencing the higher direction of the war.[85]

On 5 April, King informed Roosevelt of the plan to split the Pacific into separate army and navy zones. "Marshall and I are in complete agreement on subdividing the Pacific", he wrote. "We believe that Australia proper and the New Zealand line of communications area are two strategic entities. The defence of Australia is primarily a land-air problem for which the best possible naval support is a fleet free to manoeuvre without restrictions imposed by the local situation. New Zealand, on the other hand, is a key point for the support of the Pacific line of communications, the security of which is a naval responsibility. New Zealand has no relation to the defence of Australia in current circumstances."[86]

The Pacific was to be divided into the South-West Pacific Area stretching from Australia northward to the Philippines, under General MacArthur, who had just arrived in Australia, and the Pacific Ocean Area under Admiral Nimitz, Commander of the United States Pacific Fleet. The Pacific Ocean area was divided into three: North, Central and the South Pacific Area, which included New Zealand. This was essentially a compromise between the United States Navy, which saw the best route to Japan directly across the Central Pacific and MacArthur, who was determined to fulfil his promise to return to the Philippines. New Zealand was disappointed at being placed in a different area and under a different command from Australia. Fraser argued that the two countries were a strategic whole and, initially, the Australian Chiefs of Staff agreed with this assessment saying that Australia's line of communications with the United States was dependent on New Zealand, along with Fiji and New Caledonia. However, after being informed that the arrangement probably could not be changed, New Zealand agreed that the best course was "to register a protest, but to accept the arrangement and do all possible to make it work".[87]

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[85] Geoffrey Cox cited in K. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1976, pp. 218-219; Wood, p. 220.

[86] King to Roosevelt, 5 April 1942, NARA, R.G. 165 Entry 421 Box 176, File ABC 323.31 Pacific Ocean Area.

[87] NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 81-82, and Wood, pp. 219-221.

It would be neither wise nor proper to allow the offensive against the Japanese in the South Pacific to be conducted entirely by the Americans.

(Peter Fraser, 4 December 1942)

The original directive from the United States Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area, Admiral Nimitz, set out his basic strategic goals. The principal aims were to hold the island positions between the United States and the South-West Pacific Area necessary for the security of the line of communications between those regions, to support operations in the South-West Pacific and to prepare to launch major amphibious offensives against Japanese positions. Commanders of armed forces within the area were to be informed by their governments that orders issued by Nimitz were to be considered as emanating from their respective governments. Concerning New Zealand, Nimitz was directed that the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff would be responsible for the land defence of New Zealand, subject to such strategic decisions affecting this responsibility as may be made by him for the conduct of naval operations in the Pacific Ocean Area. The New Zealand government was concerned about how this would affect its forces on Fiji and also emphasised that any movement of forces from the Dominion into the Pacific would require government approval.[88]

On 14 April, King assured Nash that he appreciated the frank and direct way in which the question of the command directive was being handled and especially the co-operation of the New Zealand government even though it did not agree with the American strategical division of the Pacific Theatre. He also assured Nash that the United States Chiefs of Staff would do everything in their power to "prevent the occurrence of the difficulties which your government anticipates". As regards the directive, he informed Nash that although Fiji was under the command of the Commander South Pacific Area the New Zealand forces in Fiji would remain under the command of the New Zealand General Officer Commanding and would not be moved from Fiji without the concurrence of the New Zealand government. He also reassured Nash that in regard to the possible movement of New Zealand forces out of

[88] NANZ Air 1 130/4/1 (this contains as Appendix A-C copies of the new and original (4 April 1942) directives to Nimitz). Reproduced as appendix A of this thesis. See also NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 85-87.

New Zealand, the United States Chiefs of Staff had already informed the President that:

> proposals of the United States Chiefs of Staff (for operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas) made to the President as United States Commander in Chief are subject to review by him from the standpoint of higher political considerations and to reference by him to the Pacific War Council in Washington when necessary. The interests of the nations whose forces or whose land possessions may be involved in these military operations are further safe-guarded by the power each nation retains to refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable.

This would become part of the directive and the United States Chiefs of Staff hoped to receive the formal approval of the New Zealand Government.[89] Nash replied to King that the New Zealand Government accepted his assurances and agreed with the proposed directive. At the same time, the government extended its assurance to King and the United States Government that "all the resources of New Zealand and its peoples will be used in the fullest co-operation with you and your commanders to assist in carrying the present struggle to a successful conclusion."[90]

On 18 April 1942, Vice-Admiral Robert L. Ghormley was informed by Admiral King that he had been selected to command the vast South Pacific Area and should immediately establish a headquarters in Auckland, from where an offensive would be launched into the South Pacific. "You will have a large area under your command", King told Ghormley, "and a most difficult task. I do not have the tools to give you to carry out that task as it should be." Until then, Ghormley had been in London as Special Naval Observer, and remembered that "the knowledge of the geography of the Pacific was hazy to American citizens generally and even to many of those in high places who were vitally concerned with the war effort. Nor was the political and diplomatic situation known and evaluated with the intimate knowledge necessary to produce quick results." Ghormley himself had been born and raised on

[89] King to Nash, 14 April 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/1.
[90] Nash to Prime Minister, 15 April 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/5.

the West Coast of the United States "where the Oriental question had long been a live one", and was well aware of Japanese potential after a recent visit to Manchuria.[91]

Initially there was some concern about the use of New Zealand facilities, and the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, asked the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, for assurances that if the navy was to use New Zealand ports it would not be hampered by the country's labour difficulties. Either the New Zealand government should be asked to impose martial law, he suggested, or the United States forces should be given authority to provide or contract their own labour.[92] Although Ghormley had been appointed commander of the South Pacific Area, at this stage he had no authority over the land forces for the defence of New Zealand. Anti-submarine defences along with inshore and offshore patrols would also be considered part of New Zealand's land defences and therefore the responsibility of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff. On 8 May Roosevelt approved the assumption of full responsibility for the defence of Fiji and a formal agreement was eventually signed between Britain and the United States on 15 August 1942. Despite the assumption of responsibility for Fiji, however, the United States did not accept a commitment to supply any of the New Zealand forces stationed there whereas the New Zealand government had presumed that this would happen automatically. Negotiations between the two governments would continue on this matter for some time.[93]

Rear-Admiral John S. McCain assumed command of all air forces in the South Pacific Area on 20 May 1942, although once again he had authority over RNZAF forces stationed in Fiji and New Caledonia but not in New Zealand. Furthermore, the American War Department did not consider itself committed to the supply of New Zealand forces, either in New Zealand or in the islands. It was hoped in New Zealand that this situation would be rectified after discussions between the New Zealand government and the United States Chiefs of Staff because, while the New Zealand Army was adequately equipped through British sources, the RNZAF was dependent on the United States for aircraft. On 25 May, Admiral Ghormley arrived in

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[91] "Admiral Ghormley's Account of Early History, April-November 1942" manuscript in World War II Command File: South Pacific Naval Force History, Box 288, File 178, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center, pp. i, 1-5.
[92] Navy Secretary to Secretary of State, 18 May 1942, Administrative History Appendices Number 34(16)(b), Operational Archives, United States Naval Historical Center.
[93] NANZ Air 118/32, pp. 42-46.

Wellington for his first meeting with the New Zealand War Council including the Prime Minister, Coates, and Jones, as well as the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff: Commodore Atwell Lake, the Chief of Naval Staff, Lieutenant General Edward Puttick, General Officer Commanding New Zealand Military Forces, and Air Commodore Victor Goddard, the Chief of Air Staff.

After firstly reassuring Fraser over his concerns that co-operation with Australia would be properly handled, Ghormley declined the invitation to establish his headquarters in Wellington rather than Auckland. Auckland, he proposed, would be considered a Naval Operating Base organised and administered under his direction using both New Zealand and American personnel and facilities. Puttick then brought up the question of the command of New Zealand forces in New Zealand and also any expeditionary force that might be formed. Ghormley's directive and instructions left the command of New Zealand forces in New Zealand to the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, but he stated that any forces formed for the Pacific theatre would come under his command or that of the designated task force commanders.[94]

Throughout the war, the Americans used a task force system in which a combat organisation of naval craft, ground and air forces was created for an attack on a specific objective. After that objective had been achieved, the task force was disbanded and a new one formed, more often than not from the same elements, due to the shortages of resources in the Solomons. Ghormley requested that the New Zealand forces in Fiji remain there after the arrival of the United States division, instead of being withdrawn to New Zealand as had originally been planned. Goddard also expressed his concern that the RNZAF units on duty in Fiji were under command of the General Officer Commanding Fiji when their principle role was convoy protection. He was concerned too about the command of RNZAF units in New Zealand in relation to United States Marine air units, naval missions and New Zealand land defences. Ghormley assured Goddard that he did not anticipate any difficulties. Further discussion continued on questions of command, the land defence of New Zealand and the establishment of a Joint Purchasing Committee, before the meeting

[94] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 25 May 1942, Microfilm copy at Alexander Turnbull Collection, MS 0916.

was closed with reassurances from Fraser that Ghormley would have the full co-operation of his government.[95]

Ghormley later recalled receiving a very warm welcome in New Zealand where the government did everything within its powers to try to persuade him to establish his headquarters in Wellington. Ghormley had declined saying that too much valuable time would be lost in discussion if he set up in Wellington. "I feel certain that if I had done", he remembered, "I would never have been free for a moment. I would have been subject to constant calls for advice or suggestions, not only regarding the South Pacific but also in regard to local matters. These would probably have started on questions of defence, but would have ended up on questions involving politics. This I desired to steer clear of." Ghormley found Peter Fraser, to be "well informed, quiet spoken, jealous of New Zealand's rights and his Labour Government's rights in New Zealand". He was impressed by the level of co-operation between Fraser and the American minister, Patrick Hurley, whom he found to be a "picturesque, affable and able American". Ghormley believed Hurley had easily won and held the confidence of Fraser and the New Zealand people. Ghormley was also impressed by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff: they "knew their jobs", he thought, "were enthusiastic, and were eager to help." Goddard was "full of pep and ideas" and informed him of forces available, their disposition and future plans. It was only now that Ghormley's attention was drawn to the extent of New Zealand's growing manpower problem and also to the fact that New Zealand did not have the surplus of many of the items of food and material that planners in Washington had presumed would be available for use by American forces.[96]

As well as 4 and 5 Squadrons stationed in Fiji, a flight of Hudsons was detached from 4 Squadron and sent to New Caledonia at the request of Admiral McCain with the intention of building them up to a full squadron as soon as the aircraft could be made available. This unit engaged in anti-submarine patrols and convoy escort duties under the command of the American colonel commanding the Allied air forces in New Caledonia. The Fiji units carried out daily patrols of the approaches to Fiji and close anti-submarine escort for all ships arriving at and

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[95] ibid.

[96] "Admiral Ghormley's Account of Early History, April-November 1942", pp. 27-31, 98.

departing from Suva. Group Captain Geoffrey Roberts acted as air adviser and Officer Commanding Allied Air Forces in Fiji until this position too could be filled by a senior American officer. American resistance to placing their forces under non-American control was long-lived, however, and Nimitz immediately ordered Ghormley to base a United States Army Air officer in Fiji of sufficient rank to ensure that unity of air command was exercised by the United States. Failing that, he should reach an agreement with the New Zealand authorities that the United States "having preponderance of air forces, its air commander should exercise unity of command regardless of relative rank".[97]

Even further from home, a New Zealand fighter squadron and an airfield construction squadron had already served bravely in the futile campaign to save Malaya and Singapore, before being hastily pulled out at the last moment. New Zealand had agreed to provide an airfield construction squadron because of the need for airfields in Malaya and the expertise available in New Zealand.[98] It had arrived in Malaya in August 1941, and struggled to build several airfields, which were soon destroyed and abandoned to the Japanese as they swept down the Malayan Peninsula. In response to a British request, a fighter squadron (488 RNZAF Squadron) was formed at Rongotai and shipped to Singapore during October and did its best with obsolete Brewster Buffalo fighters. The squadron was supplemented late in the campaign with a few Hawker Hurricanes, but the Allied forces on Singapore were by now no match for the Japanese. The squadron was withdrawn just before the surrender of Singapore. The airfield construction squadron was also withdrawn to Java and eventually Australia.[99]

Japan's rapid expansion into the Pacific was temporarily halted by American forces in conflict in the Coral Sea from 6-8 May and then finally in one of the war's most decisive battles near Midway Island on 4 June 1942. Japan became determined,

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[97] Notes on the Development of the RNZAF, 20 August 1942, Australian National Archives A1196/7 item 36/501/317, p. 2; and Nimitz Command Summary, Book One, pp. 462, 550.

[98] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 65, Defence of Malaya, 13 December 1940, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-2.

[99] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 78-96. Some confusion exists over the naming of 488 squadron. The number was allotted under Article XV of the Empire Air Training Scheme Agreement (see Reference 79, Chapter 1 of this work) although this particular squadron was formed in New Zealand and so was actually an RNZAF squadron. Its personnel returned to New Zealand after the fall of Singapore, but the 488 label was reused in June 1942 for a night-fighter squadron in Europe.

however, to defend its island territories with such tenacity that the Allies would give up and sue for peace. The Americans gradually became just as determined that the path to Tokyo lay not through India or China but through the Pacific and that this path would be shared by MacArthur and Nimitz. Early in June, the United States Chiefs of Staff approved a plan for offensive operations in the South Pacific. The plan was divided into three stages: landings in the south-eastern Solomon Islands; advances up the Solomons and at the same time along the north-east coast of New Guinea; then an attack on Rabaul, the powerful Japanese base on the island of New Britain.

After the great sea battles of May and June 1942, New Zealand was no longer in any immediate danger and both Britain and the United States were in favour of New Zealand continuing its effort in Europe and the Middle East. On 12 May, the United States took responsibility for Fiji, Tonga and Fanning Island and in June, Ghormley established his Headquarters in Auckland. Despite this, and despite a rapidly worsening manpower crisis at home, the New Zealand government still felt compelled to commit itself to forces in the Pacific. Fraser did not want New Zealand to be seen as shirking its fair share in this theatre, but most of all he wanted a substantial British presence in the Pacific. "It would be neither wise nor proper," he later warned Churchill, "to allow the offensive against the Japanese in the South Pacific to be conducted entirely by the Americans without substantial British collaboration."[100]

Interwar planning based on the sending of the British fleet to Singapore had clearly failed as the Commonwealth faced what the British Chiefs of Staff had hinted might happen in their memo of June 1940. Moreover, it had taken two years for this to happen during which time New Zealand had geared its major wartime effort to providing a division in the Middle East as well as training men for the RAF in Europe. The two-year interlude between the outbreak of war in Europe and then in Asia had been crucial to the survival of the Commonwealth war effort, but now left New Zealand in a dilemma as to where it should concentrate its efforts. New Zealand moved from full involvement in British Commonwealth defence to the protective umbrella of the United States for the first time. The Pacific-European dilemma, however, would continue throughout the rest of the Second World War and much of

[100]Fraser to Churchill, 4 December 1942, *Documents,* Volume II, p. 148.

the argument would have to do with what role should be played by the RNZAF in the Pacific.

Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, Commander of South Pacific Area. On 18 April 1942, Ghormley was warned that he was to be given a vast area and a "most difficult" task without the necessary tools to carry it out.

Air Commodore Leonard Isitt and Walter Nash, New Zealand Minister to the United States, being welcomed to 75 Squadron (RAF) by Group Captain E. G. Olson in August 1942. Even at that date the Empire Air Training Scheme remained the major focus of the RNZAF.

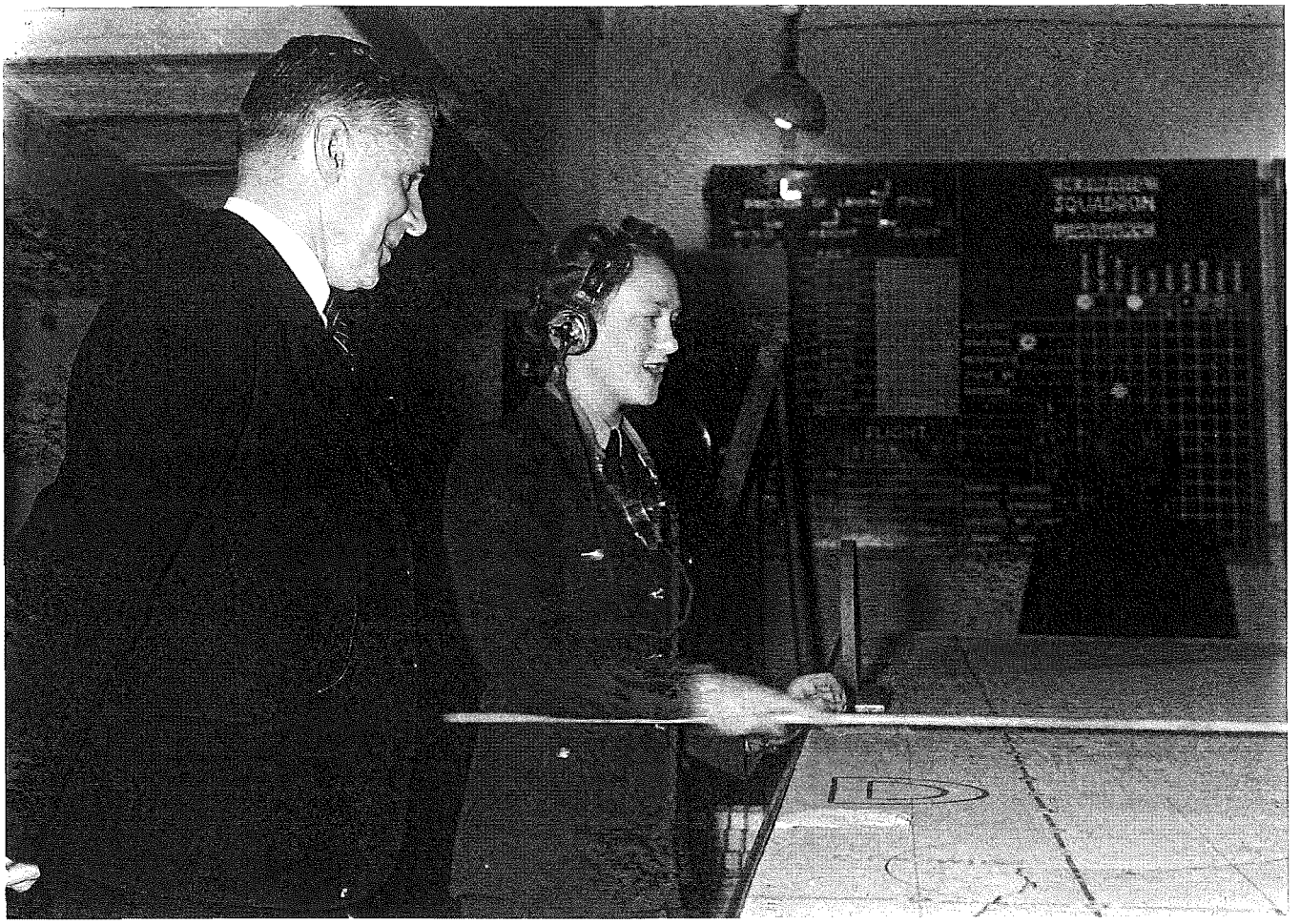
Time for a smoke. RNZAF officers at air exercises in New Zealand, 28 November 1942. Left to Right: Wing Commander G. R. White, Wing Commander R. J. Cohen, Air Commodore M. W. Buckley, Air Commodore J. L. Findlay, Air Commodore T. M. Wilkes.

Rear-Admiral John S. McCain, a "true and staunch friend of the RNZAF", and Major General Alexander A Vandegrift, take a break during the Guadalcanal campaign.

Admiral Ghormley thought he was an excellent man with lots of pep, but doubted he understood how dependent New Zealand's forces were on outside help. The Chief of Air Staff, Air Commodore Victor Goddard, in formal pose, 1943.

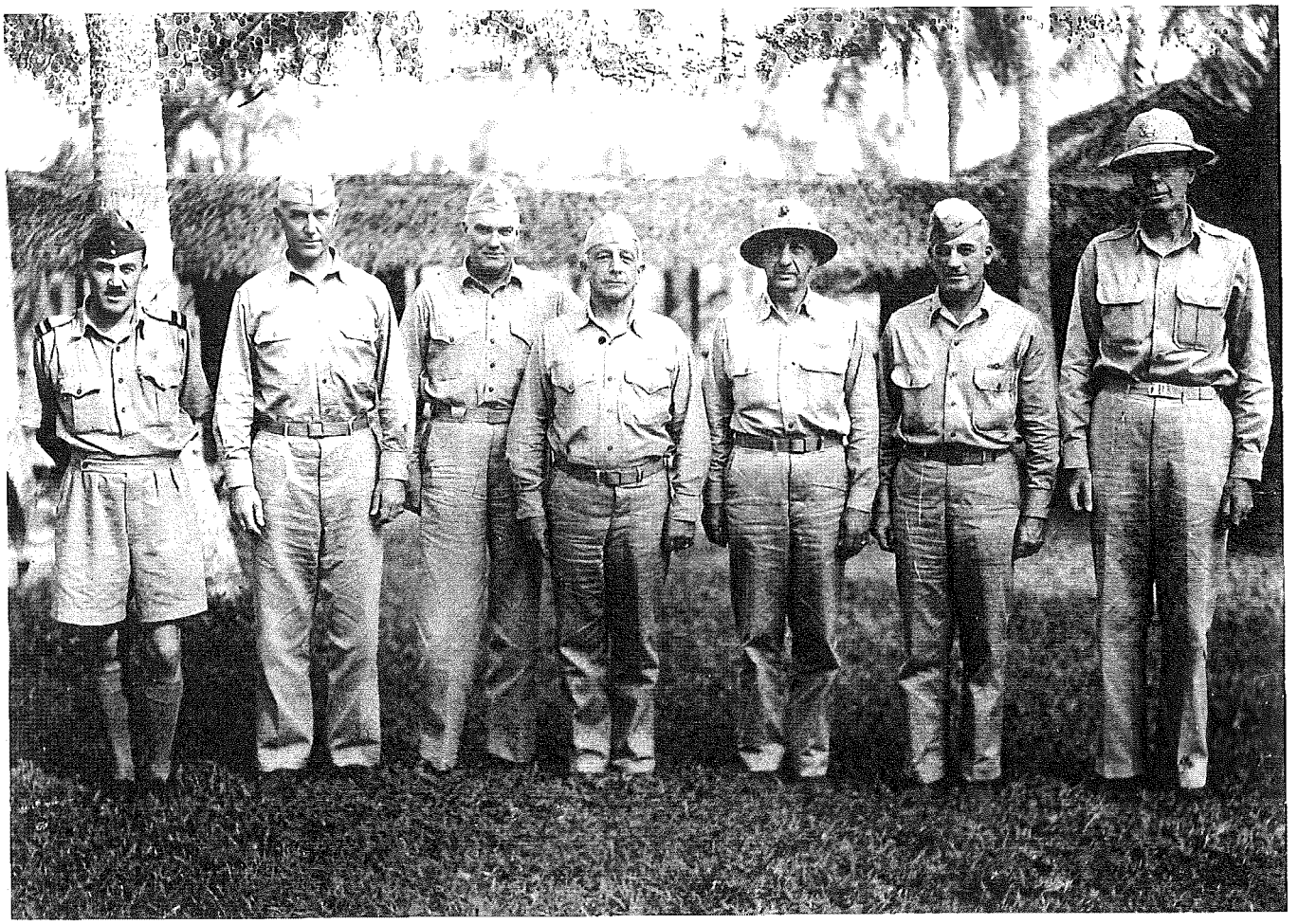
"Well informed, quiet spoken, jealous of New Zealand's rights and his Labour Government's rights in New Zealand." New Zealand's Prime Minister for most of the Second World War, Peter Fraser.

Despite an ability to avoid controversy and smooth out difficulties that arose within his ministry, many New Zealand government and service officials held the Minister of Defence, Frederick Jones, in "very low esteem". Air Commodore James Findlay shows Mr. Jones map plotting, 1943.



Mr. Jones receiving instruction from a WAAF plotter in a radio location operations room, 1943.

Air Commodore Maurice Buckley and Air Commodore Isitt in discussion, 1943.



Gathering after a staff conference at COMAIRSOPAC Headquarters, Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, in July 1943. Left-Right: Air Commodore S. Wallingford, Rear-Admiral O. B. Hardison, Vice-Admiral W. L. Ainsworth, Vice-Admiral A. W. Fitch, Major General R. J. Mitchell, Major General N. F. Twining, Brigadier General B. C. Lockwood.

Commander in Chief United States Fleet, Admiral Ernest J. King, Washington D.C., October 1943.

Chapter Three

The RNZAF's Contribution

I feel sure that this Air Force of ours has quite substantial potentialities and hope that it may be possible for it to be of real help to you.

Air Commodore Victor Goddard, 23 June 1942

Under the agreement signed between Lieutenant-General Henry H. Arnold, Rear-Admiral John H. Towers and Air Vice-Marshal Sir John Slessor, in June 1942, Britain and the United States agreed that powerful United States Air Forces must be created and maintained for the defeat of their enemies. The agreement stated that every appropriate aircraft built in the United States should be manned and fought by American crews, but allocations would also be made "to equip and maintain certain existing and projected squadrons of the Royal Air Force, and of Dominion Air Forces operating in theatres of British and Combined Strategic responsibility, for which units of the United States Army Air Forces cannot be substituted." The United States Chiefs of Staff would have responsibility for determining the strategic requirements of those Dominions falling within American spheres of responsibility and allocations would be made accordingly through the Combined Munitions Assignment Board. The agreement also decided that these allocations would be manned by Dominion personnel wherever they were available but "when the aircraft allocated exceed the Dominion personnel available they will be manned in accordance with arrangements agreed between the United States Government and the Dominion Government concerned."[1]

Unfortunately, Admiral Ghormley's announcement that he was not responsible for the land defence of New Zealand was both surprising and unwelcome. The Chiefs of Staff and the war cabinet were greatly disappointed that command of New Zealand's army and air force had not been given to him. It had been the government's intention that Ghormley should "take full advantage of, and assume full responsibility for, the development and equipment of all New Zealand forces to meet the requirements both of defence and future offensive operations". Fraser asked Nash to

find out precisely why New Zealand had been excluded. If he found out that it was because Admiral King thought it was New Zealand's wish to be excluded, Fraser urged Nash to clarify this misunderstanding as soon as possible and stress that New Zealand wished its forces to play their full part in future offensive operations in the Pacific. This particularly applied to the air force which had excellent and extensive resources for producing first-class squadrons, but only lacked the means to equip them. This would be especially important if air operations were to be conducted from or close to New Zealand.[2]

Goddard confided to Air Commodore Leonard Isitt, who was then serving as air attaché in Washington, that Ghormley had suggested to him that this exclusion was due to representations made to Admiral King by Walter Nash in Washington. The effects of this decision seemed likely to be dual control of New Zealand's forces in Fiji, a lack of co-ordination of defence plans in New Zealand, and an exclusion from supply and future operations. Goddard felt that New Zealand had "slipped off the map again". Furthermore, there was concern amongst Ghormley's headquarters, as well as New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff and war cabinet, that New Zealand forces were not required to remain in Fiji, but to return for the defence of New Zealand. This was not New Zealand's desire and Goddard wanted Nash to tell King that, without any pressure from Ghormley, the war cabinet was already agreed to New Zealand forces remaining in Fiji unconditionally. Goddard felt sure that, although hopeful, the government had no intention of pressing the United States for further reinforcements for New Zealand which probably appeared unnecessary in American or even British eyes, and were willing to give Ghormley full responsibility and full support.[3]

Goddard wanted Isitt to have a full picture of the attitude in Wellington because he feared that a seriously wrong decision had been arrived at owing to a misunderstanding of New Zealand's motives. He felt that the exclusion of New Zealand forces from the forward positions in the Pacific theatre would have a bad effect on their morale and upon New Zealand's war effort generally. As for the RNZAF, Admiral McCain had been unaware of its size and efficiency, but now that

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[1] Combined Chiefs of Staff Paper 61/1, Aircraft Situation of the United Nations, 22 June 1942, Australian War Memorial (AWM) Archives, Canberra ACT, AWM 54 14/1/5. This was later amended by the Joint United States Strategic Committee, see Hayes, pp. 160-161.
[2] Fraser to Nash 19 June 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 92-95.

Goddard had corrected this he was sure McCain would want to develop the air force for future operations and equip its squadrons as though they were American. Unfortunately, unless they were placed under McCain's command, he would have no authority for this development. Goddard's own observations of American shore-based air forces left him in no doubt that New Zealand squadrons with United States equipment, trained in New Zealand would be a valuable contribution to future offensive operations. New Zealand's army and air forces, Goddard felt, must be given a full share in future fighting.[4]

We are not content with this role and wish to be associated with future operations.
(Air Commodore Victor Goddard, July 1942)

Goddard hoped to travel to Noumea as soon as possible for discussions with McCain on the command, disposition and employment of air forces in Fiji, the works programme under way there, preparations for the arrival of United States air forces in New Zealand, and the air defence of New Zealand.[5] He told General Puttick and Commodore Lake that the decision to exclude New Zealand's forces was against the wishes of the government and contrary to the Dominion's best interests. Whoever was responsible, therefore, was doing New Zealand a disservice and the matter should be taken up by the government at the Pacific War Council.[6] The problem for the RNZAF was that its development at the time was almost exclusively for the defence of the Dominion. However, Goddard added, this development was essential not only for New Zealand, but also for the protection of American base areas within New Zealand. "The time will come," Goddard told the New Zealand Defence Minister, Frederick Jones, "when offensive operations will be staged from these base areas and it will then be most desirable that the New Zealand Air Force should play its full part."[7]

The fighter squadrons being built up might be adequate for local defence of Auckland and Wellington, and possibly for RNZAF bases, and the Hudson reconnaissance squadrons were valuable for locating enemy forces, but the RNZAF

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[3] Goddard to Isitt, 8 June 1942, NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 95-98.
[4] ibid., pp. 98-99.
[5] Goddard to Jones, 29 May 1942, NANZ EA1 81/10/4-1.
[6] NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 99-103.
[7] Goddard to Jones, 17 June 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/4.

was not equipped to take part in offensive operations or even to act in support of the New Zealand Army. This was because the United Kingdom and United States Chiefs of Staff viewed the possibility of large-scale attack as being "so remote as not to warrant high priority being given to our requirements to meet it." The best alternative, therefore, was to put forward claims for modern aircraft on the basis of future offensive operations. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and war cabinet were of the opinion that the RNZAF would have to be equipped for offensive action, simply because there was little hope of the United States supplying aircraft solely for the defence of New Zealand. At least at this early stage, the desire to obtain an operational role was strictly secondary to the need for modern equipment to defend New Zealand.[8]

The New Zealand Army was being satisfactorily equipped and employed, but the RNZAF would have to be equipped and trained in conjunction with American forces. The only way for this to happen would be for the RNZAF to be placed under the jurisdiction of the South Pacific commander. Goddard informed Jones that both Admiral Ghormley and Admiral McCain had expressed their interest in having the RNZAF play its full part in future operations. As it was, however, neither Goddard nor Ghormley had a mandate on which to plan the offensive development of the RNZAF, while the British Chiefs of Staff in London - through whom requests for equipment still had to go - no longer had any responsibility for strategic developments in the Pacific.[9]

Goddard remained convinced that the RNZAF had been excluded because of a misunderstanding and not because it was the desire of the American authorities. An enquiry should be made, he suggested, from the New Zealand Minister in Washington for an explanation of the circumstances which led to the exclusion. The unpublished official history narrative suggests at this stage that New Zealand, and especially Nash, had been so keen that the Dominion's defence was not overlooked that it appeared to be attempting to establish a position above that which its tiny population entitled it to. Furthermore, despite Roosevelt's argument that it would provide for an "altogether

[8] ibid. See also the RNZAF Official History narrative "The Manpower Situation in 1944/1945", NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 1-2, and "The Defence of the Pacific 1942" NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 113-114.

[9] Goddard to Jones, 17 June 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/4.

unwieldy body", Nash had pushed for New Zealand representation in Washington on the grounds that New Zealand must have a voice in the highest quarters both within and outside the Commonwealth. It is quite possible, therefore, that this influenced the American decision to exclude the land defence of New Zealand from the South Pacific Area command, and this is certainly what Goddard believed.[10]

There followed a rather confusing series of telegrams and notes between Fraser and Nash in which Nash suggested that it was the inconsistencies and conditions of New Zealand policy that were more than likely to have been the real reason for the exclusion of New Zealand forces from American command. Fraser said he wanted New Zealand's land, sea and air forces in the South Pacific placed under Ghormley, but had completely failed to express this clearly to Nash. Furthermore, while King had given his assurances that New Zealand would have the right to refuse the use of its troops for any venture with which it did not agree, it is likely that he inferred from this that he could not rely on using New Zealand forces. On several occasions, Nash had found King agreeable to the use of New Zealand forces with his own and willing to co-operate in making special arrangements necessary to enable New Zealand to take part.[11]

As the narrative suggests, "anyone who has studied Mr. Nash's speeches in the international sphere will know that he has never committed New Zealand to anything precisely - but it is equally apparent that his instructions from the war cabinet - which he probably carried out with more accuracy than he realised - allowed him to commit New Zealand to very little". The narrator argues that amongst the rapidly growing American forces: "New Zealand forces in the Pacific formed an appendix - and possibly, from the United States point of view, not a very essential one - and it is hardly surprising if New Zealand was neglected or even forgotten". Fraser and Nash were providing the Americans with constant reminders of New Zealand's existence, but these were reminders of assistance required, rather than of assistance offered. New Zealand was concerned with the protection of part of an area for which the Americans had accepted responsibility and for which, no doubt, they considered their plans adequate. Moreover the one thing the United States had not received was "an

[10] NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 43-45, 103.

unequivocal and straightforward expression of New Zealand's desire to play its full part in the Pacific offensive". It is hardly likely, therefore, that the Americans would be rushing to assume supply responsibility for New Zealand forces, particularly when the required equipment was still in very short supply.[12]

Goddard appears mistaken in believing that because the army was adequately equipped from British sources, the government were not concerned about its inclusion; Fraser had asked for the army and the navy to be included. Yet, in reality, of the country's three armed services, it was only the RNZAF that New Zealand especially desired to place under the South Pacific Commander. In essence, Fraser told Nash on 22 June, New Zealand wished to have a forward plan for the RNZAF to equip, say, twenty modern squadrons of the required type by 1943. To make this possible, New Zealand desired that the United States should accept responsibility for the equipment and development of the RNZAF and this could only happen if it came under American command. Nash suggested that surely the best procedure would be to place all the forces - land, sea and air - in the South Pacific Area under Ghormley who in turn could delegate to the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff the command of forces allocated for the local defence of the Dominion. Fraser realised that it was possible the exclusion of the land defence of New Zealand from Ghormley's command had been a deliberate policy to enable him to concentrate on offensive operations and free him from defensive roles and political discussions within New Zealand. Once again, however, Fraser did not want any of these issues or the question of the command of New Zealand's army, to prejudice "the transfer of responsibility for the development of the Air Force".[13]

The task of negotiating an amendment of the South Pacific directive, eventually devolved to Goddard. In the meantime, however, Goddard had to wait for the United States Chiefs of Staff to adopt a plan for the development of the RNZAF. Prior to the constitution of the South Pacific Area, New Zealand had been advised by Washington to prepare base facilities for 200 United States Army Air Corps bombers and approximately 400 naval aircraft. These tentative expectations had not

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[11] For full details of this long and confused dialogue between Wellington and Washington see NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 104-126, and *Documents* Vol. III, pp. 262-266.
[12] NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 104-126, 190-191.
[13] ibid.

materialised, but Goddard was still expecting one fighter, one bomber, one dive-bomber, one reconnaissance and one parachute squadron to be sent out to complete the Marine Amphibious Division already based in the Wellington area. According to Goddard, it was Ghormley who now recommended that "New Zealand Air Forces should be re-equipped [so that they] could man, train and maintain twenty modern squadrons in 1943." He also asked for nine flying-boat crews to collect nine twin or four-engined flying-boats from the United States to operate as an RNZAF squadron from Fiji. Goddard believed that New Zealand could maintain air and ground personnel for "at least twenty modern squadrons" in 1943 without interfering with the Commonwealth Air Training scheme. Furthermore, it was his aim to "impress the Americans with this fact".[14]

The accepted role of the RNZAF, apart from Fiji and New Caledonia, was the defence of New Zealand. However, Goddard told his staff, "we are not content with this role and wish to be associated with future operations". This, he believed, was also Ghormley's desire. However, "until American intentions regarding our future employment are determined it is impossible to formulate our requirements or to proceed safely with future planning. Meanwhile, we shall continue with the Empire Air Training Scheme to maximum capacity." Goddard was concerned that the RNZAF allotments of Kittyhawks had been curtailed due to a decision that priority would be given to American requirements from American production. "Until it is decided that the RNZAF should be equipped fully to meet the requirements of defensive and offensive operations in conjunction with South Pacific Forces it seems improbable that we shall obtain further allotments of aircraft from the United States." Moreover, allotments of aircraft from the United Kingdom would now only be in conjunction with the Empire Air Training Scheme. "Consequently we shall remain unable to develop our potential and our squadrons will remain equipped with obsolete aircraft until the United States Chiefs of Staff adopt a plan for our development."[15]

Goddard wanted to stress in every responsible quarter, the economy of taking advantage of the "first-class personnel and other resources" in New Zealand for the preparation of powerful offensive air forces for future operations, rather than sending

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[14] Goddard to New Zealand Liaison Officer, London, 7 July 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/4; also Goddard to Isitt, 20 July 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/3.

excessive numbers of trainees from New Zealand to Canada and the United Kingdom. This was especially so while the United States planned to send large numbers of American airmen and aircraft to New Zealand. The New Zealand war cabinet was willing and anxious to place maximum effective offensive forces in action and hoped that a positive plan for the RNZAF would be produced with the least possible delay. Meanwhile they had requested Nash to urge Admiral King to place the RNZAF within the Pacific Ocean Command so as to ensure its development and future offensive employment.[16] "I feel sure", Goddard wrote to Ghormley, "that this Air Force of ours has quite substantial potentialities and hope that it may be possible for it to be of real help to you."[17]

On 23 June, King informed Nash that he and General Marshall had decided that they would replace New Zealand forces in Fiji so that they could be made available for amphibious training with the First Marine Division in anticipation of joint offensive action in the South-West Pacific. Previously, King had told Nash that the retention of New Zealand forces in Fiji confirmed the basic strategic concept that the defence of New Zealand was most likely to be effectively done by the holding of Fiji together with New Caledonia and Samoa as strong points "which the enemy will hesitate to pass by". However, he had also told Dill in Washington that the United States proposed to take over the defence of Fiji in the interest of homogeneity of forces in the island positions from Hawaii to New Caledonia. King now wanted the New Zealanders released for home defence rather than use Americans for this.[18]

At the same time, Nimitz asked King for authority to have Ghormley discuss sending New Zealand Army forces forward to garrison bases in the southern Solomon Islands as soon as the threat to New Zealand lessened. He was hoping that New Zealand would be able to provide a reinforced division of 20,000 men for these duties and had informed Fraser that a decision was needed as soon as possible. King was in complete agreement with these proposals as long as they did not interfere with the New Zealand forces already stationed in Fiji. The situation was still considered too

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[15] Goddard to New Zealand Liaison Officer, London, 7 July 1942.
[16] ibid.
[17] Goddard to Ghormley, 23 June 1942, Rubb Papers, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Centre.
[18] King to Dill, 7 May 1942, King to Nash, 10 June 1942 & 23 June 1942, Papers of Fleet Admiral King, Series I, Box 2, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center.

dangerous for Fiji to be left undefended and despite what King had just told Nash, the United States did not want to have to provide replacements for the New Zealanders. Nimitz informed Ghormley that the United States Army had no intention of providing garrison troops from the United States for the Guadalcanal area and he was authorised to take up at the proper time "the use of New Zealand troops for garrison forces in advanced positions" as long as it would not upset current arrangements.[19]

Ghormley knew that garrison troops would be needed after the invasion of Guadalcanal and informed Puttick of the upcoming landings so that he could investigate the possibility of New Zealand providing forces for this after it was secured. For security reasons, however, Ghormley did not want the war cabinet to know until 7 August (when the landings were due to take place) and asked Puttick not to say anything. Fraser was naturally disappointed when he found out about the American plans via General MacArthur and Prime Minister John Curtin in Australia. He informed Ghormley that he did not believe New Zealand would stand "another Crete" in the Solomon Islands and wanted to be kept better informed of future plans before he made any definite commitments concerning New Zealand forces in advanced areas or on garrison duty.[20]

In July 1942, the South Pacific Advanced Base Inspection Board reported to the American Chiefs of Staff that the defences of Auckland were sufficient only to deal with "minor nuisance raids", while the real defence of New Zealand lay in the island bases in the South-West Pacific and the naval forces to the north of New Zealand. If these were to fail, however, then the situation in New Zealand would be "critical". Headed by a retired United States Navy officer, Rear-Admiral Richard E. Byrd, the board considered that the current system of supplying the RNZAF with American aircraft through the United Kingdom was unsatisfactory. It also recommended that "consideration be given to utilising the trained pilot strength of the Royal New Zealand Air Force to strengthen the South Pacific area." Because the RNZAF had "many good pilots [but] few modern combat aircraft", the board recommended that they should be "furnished modern aircraft or their surplus pilots

[19] Nimitz Command Summary, Book One, pp. 618-619, 642; and War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area, 15 July 1942.

used elsewhere."[21] Ghormley informed Nimitz at the same time that he had been advised: "New Zealand government ready and willing to organise, train and re-equip RNZAF to meet our requirements. Estimate available personnel sufficient to man, operate and maintain twenty combat squadrons during 1943 if required equipment can be made available."[22]

At the same time, the New Zealand Prime Minister's Department prepared a cable for Nash saying that the Prime Minister was most surprised to learn that a supreme land, sea, and air command including New Zealand in the South Pacific Area had still not been set up. Once again, the main concern remained the transfer of responsibility for the development of the air force. While McCain already had his headquarters in New Caledonia for "urgent local reasons", the New Zealand government believed that this location would not be satisfactory for co-ordinating the training and development of the South Pacific air forces. The potential mobility of modern air forces, the government argued, demanded

> big developments in ground organisation and in co-ordination so that the advantages of mobility can be exploited.... the proper employment of air forces, particularly in support of naval operations, demands common doctrine and as far as possible complete operational co-ordination which can only be achieved under single direction. The development of the air defence of New Zealand can proceed simultaneously with development for offensive operations.

The New Zealand government was happy to accept responsibility for the land defence of New Zealand, but this could not be done satisfactorily unless the air force was re-equipped. Nash was informed that while New Zealand was anxious to place all its forces under American command:

> nevertheless we do not wish to embarrass Ghormley with responsibilities which he may not be willing to undertake, and we are

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[20] "Admiral Ghormley's Account of Early History, April-November 1942". This is backed up by Berendsen in Cox to Secretary of State, 9 December 1942, NARA R.G. 84, Wellington Legation Confidential File, Box 1.

[21] "Report on New Zealand" by South Pacific Advanced Base Inspection Board, 23 June - 13 July 1942, NARA, R.G. 38 Strategic Plans Division Records, Series III, Box 63, pp. II-2, III-29. On Auckland and Wellington as United States Navy bases see also P. O. Coletta & K. J. Bauer (eds.) *United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases, Overseas*, Westport, CT., Greenwood Press, 1985, pp. 19-21, 359-360.

[22] Ghormley to Nimitz, 17 July 1942, Nimitz Command Summary, Book One, p. 750.

> therefore, still willing to accept responsibility for the land defence of New Zealand as at present arranged.... We cannot, however, discharge that responsibility satisfactorily unless the Air Force in particular is equipped to meet [these] requirements.

The re-equipment of the air force and its development should, it was considered, be related at the same time to future offensive operations for which it should be trained in conjunction with the remainder of the South Pacific air forces under McCain.[23]

The United States Minister to New Zealand, Patrick J. Hurley, reported to Cordell Hull that the RNZAF and also the Royal New Zealand Navy wished to be strictly under Ghormley's command as a "strategic measure". This was especially so for the air force which desired equipment procurement through Ghormley based on the pattern adopted by the United States in Australia. The New Zealand Army desired to have direct procurement through the United States in case of need, but felt that their needs were already well provided for through London. Hurley's personal opinion, however, backed up by discussion with New Zealand military officials, was that even the army lacked full fighting equipment and munitions reserves and was likely to be ineffective unless more readily supplied.[24]

Ghormley recognised the need to co-ordinate shipping and realised he was in the best position to state what lease goods were needed, but hesitated for several reasons. He did not think his staff was adequate to investigate and give intelligent answers on civilian supplies, he wished to concentrate on the Pacific offensive rather than on supply questions and, finally, he felt unable to speak for the New Zealand forces while they were under separate command. Hurley believed that the position would be greatly clarified by a final determination of Ghormley's relationship to the New Zealand forces and suggested that Ghormley be given authority over them for the purposes of supply.[25]

New Zealand hoped that the RNZAF would be placed under McCain's command and that he would delegate to the Chief of Air Staff responsibility for the air defence of New Zealand in the same way that Ghormley delegated to the Chief of Naval Staff responsibility for the local naval defence of New Zealand waters.

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[23] Draft Cablegram (marked "Not Sent") from New Zealand Prime Minister to New Zealand Minister in Washington, 12 July 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/4, pp. 1-3.
[24] Hurley to Secretary of State, 13 July 1942, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5116, File 847h.24/27.
[25] ibid.

Alternatively, the government was willing that Ghormley, through McCain, should accept responsibility for the technical and operational development of the air force without assuming responsibility for its organisation and employment. This would be except for squadrons under McCain's command for co-operation with amphibious forces or defence of the South Pacific islands. Moreover, New Zealand desired that all air forces based in New Zealand, whether RNZAF or American, should be under a unified system of operational control for the purpose of air defence. The most important factor was that requirements for air force equipment from American sources should pass through the Pacific chain of naval command rather than through the British Purchasing Commission.[26]

I believe you have done the right thing. It is altogether generous.
(President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 8 December 1942)

On 7 August, United States Marines landed on Guadalcanal, capturing the island and the almost-completed Japanese air strip with little opposition. Almost immediately, however, the Japanese struck back, launching serious naval and air attacks and landing troops on the island. This crucial campaign quickly developed into a drawn-out struggle fought under terrible conditions. Both sides suffered huge losses at sea while on land the climate was oppressive, the island was covered in dense tropical rain forest, rife with malaria and dengue-fever, and there were chronic shortages of food, medicine and supplies on both sides. Supplying the Marines on the island was, initially, almost impossible and air cover was desperately short. Washington was informed: "without continuous fighter replacements now, there is serious question if position can be held". Guadalcanal, it was hoped, would become a "sinkhole for enemy air power" which could be "consolidated, expanded and exploited to [the] enemy's mortal hurt". However this could only be achieved with immediate air support. The situation, Nimitz told King, "demands greatly increased flow to vital Pacific combat areas of bombers, fighters and transport planes with pilots qualified for capable performance under tough operating conditions".[27]

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[26] Draft Cablegram (marked "Not Sent") from New Zealand Prime Minister to New Zealand Minister in Washington, 12 July 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/4, pp. 3-4.
[27] War Diary of the South Pacific Commander, 30-31 August 1942, and Nimitz to King, 18 October 1942, also in War Diary.

Two months before the initial landing, South Pacific Command requested a RNZAF reconnaissance squadron to fly anti-submarine patrols from New Caledonia. Such was the submarine problem and, especially, the shortage of aircraft that McCain asked for New Zealand's obsolete Vincent bombers to be sent. Goddard considered that this type of aircraft would be completely unsuitable so on 23 September, 9 Bomber Reconnaissance Squadron was formed there with Hudsons from New Zealand and Fiji. Even though this would affect the air force's ability to carry out its anti-submarine and shipping patrols from Fiji, Goddard welcomed the prospect of closer collaboration with American forces. He also hoped it would encourage McCain to do all he could towards the further re-equipment of New Zealand squadrons.[28]

Soon after, 3 Squadron, also equipped with Hudsons, departed Whenuapai for the forward zone where they were settled in improvised and sometimes rough facilities. With American and local help, camps were improved and other problems, such as ensuring American fighters did not confuse RNZAF markings for Japanese, were addressed.[29] At first, there had been confusion amongst the New Zealanders as to the American chain of command when Admiral McCain and Lieutenant-General Millard F. Harmon (the Commanding General, United States Army Air Force, South Pacific) both requested the squadron at different locations and different times. There were also difficulties at home where finding enough air and ground crew fit for overseas service proved to be a problem. Moreover, despite the New Zealand government pressing the United States for an active role in the South Pacific, there was "a serious absence of anticipation on the part of Air Staff and the Directorate" and a lack of equipment and appropriate departing procedures caused headaches. However, the whole experience proved a useful Staff exercise for the inexperienced RNZAF command, and 3 Squadron soon began patrols from Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides before moving up to Henderson Field on Guadalcanal in November. This was, according to the air force official historians, a "landmark in the history of the RNZAF". The Squadron became not only the first RNZAF squadron to take part

[28] D. W. Rutherford, "Guadalcanal Campaign July 1942 - February 1943", NANZ Air 118 22/1, pp. 113-114.
[29] Group Captain Sidney Wallingford to Goddard, 5 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/8/4.

in operations against the Japanese in the South Pacific, but "the only British Air Force unit to take part in the recapture of the British island of Guadalcanal".[30]

By this time, New Zealand was also supplying army garrisons in New Caledonia, Norfolk Island and Tonga, and air reconnaissance in Fiji and Tonga. The New Zealand 3 Division was fully established in New Caledonia between October 1942 and January 1943. As soon as it was decided that the RNZAF should obtain an operational role in the Pacific, manpower problems began in earnest. For the air force, the main problem was the large percentage of experienced support personnel who were unfit for overseas service.[31] As a result, the RNZAF began a large scale recruiting programme and its strength in New Zealand rose from 19,300 in September 1942 to 30,700 a year later. Over the same period, its strength in the Pacific rose from 1,241 to 3,667. Despite this expansion, there was still considered to be an acute shortage in all trade groups of the RNZAF. In order to continue training men for the RAF, to replace unfit personnel in New Zealand, and to provide for the expected expansion of the number of squadrons in the Pacific, the air force required more fit men than could be supplied from civilian sources and arrangements were begun to transfer men from the army. The RNZAF's manpower policy and situation would cause tension between these two forces as well as public controversy throughout the rest of the war.[32]

For New Zealand, the problem was simply a shortage of manpower generally. As more and more New Zealanders prepared to fight Japan in the Pacific, the government was forced to consider the position of 2 Division in the Middle East and would continue to debate whether it was better to serve in the Mediterranean or in the Pacific for the rest of the war. While the Australian divisions were being removed from the Middle East for the Pacific theatre it was decided, after consultation with both Britain and the United States, that the New Zealanders would stay. President Roosevelt promised to send an American division to New Zealand, and Fraser agreed to leave 2 Division in the Middle East. Roosevelt told Fraser that he was "delighted" to hear that 2 Division would be remaining for the present. "This action", he wrote,

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[30] Rutherford, p. 1; and NANZ Air 118/52 RNZAF Station Espiritu Santo, Appendix B. pp. 3-5, 8-13.
[31] In some trades as much as 60% of the total manpower was "unfit for overseas service", NANZ Air 118/81m "Manpower in the RNZAF", p. 54.
[32] ibid., pp. 55-59.

"is renewed evidence of our mutual military interests. I believe you have done the right thing. It is altogether generous."[33]

General Bernard Freyberg reported from the Middle East that this decision had not caused any great unrest in his Division, but he believed that they should be returned home if New Zealand was directly threatened.[34] The New Zealand division's campaigns in the Middle East and European theatres remained the country's most celebrated national contribution to the war effort for several reasons. Because of its isolation, New Zealand did not feel as threatened by the Japanese as the Australians did. The Pacific quickly came to be thought of as America's war whereas the Middle East and the Western Front had been the scene of New Zealand's important First World War campaigns. In addition, there was a general distaste for jungle warfare compared to what was considered to be the open spaces and relative civility of the fighting in the desert, and for the Japanese as an enemy compared to the Germans and Italians. Essentially it is best summed up by McKinnon, who stressed that "once the immediate threat from Japan had passed, the Pacific receded from popular consciousness, [and] few argued that the national interest required New Zealand to have a bigger presence in the Pacific theatre."[35]

Meanwhile, Goddard told Admiral Nimitz on their first meeting over dinner (with at least six other Admirals) at Pearl Harbor that while the RNZAF was fully involved in the Empire Air Training Scheme, it was only four years old and "run by a handful of World War I pilots". Moreover, they only had "one clapped-out bomber squadron and half a squadron of clapped-out flying-boats" of their own. Goddard told Nimitz that he was hoping to get additional staff from England but would have to rely on the United States for modern aircraft. Nimitz informed Goddard that the allocation of aircraft was not up to him and that he would have to go to Washington to discuss the matter.[36]

On 9 August 1942, Air Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, the RAF's Vice Chief of Air Staff, told the Combined Chiefs of Staff that the Dominions were becoming

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[33] Roosevelt to Fraser, 8 December 1942, NARA, R.G. 84, Wellington Legation Confidential File, Box 1.

[34] Freyberg to Fraser, 28 March 1942, *Documents,* Vol. II, p. 42.

[35] McKinnon, pp. 48-50.

[36] V. Goddard, "Fleet Admiral King's One Mistake" (1983), RNZAF Archives, Wigram, 85/017.13, p. 2.

anxious regarding the maintenance of their existing squadrons, the provision for which had now ceased, and urged the completion of planning for a major expansion as soon as possible. The situation, Evill argued, not only weakened their forces strategically, but "tended towards a lowering of morale". At the Combined Chiefs' following meeting a few days later, it was agreed that the United States Chiefs of Staff would need an early assessment of the Dominions' strategic air requirements. Proposals for their air forces would then be examined by General Arnold, Admiral Towers, and Air Marshal Evill, in conference with air representatives from the Dominions.[37]

Also in Washington at this time, Geoffrey Cox, a New Zealand journalist and soldier, was brought over to act as New Zealand's First Secretary and, especially, to assist Nash in promoting the country. Since most Americans scarcely knew where New Zealand even was, Cox saw his job as helping the war effort by maintaining good relations which would ensure a minimum of difficulty in the supply of United States war materials. Furthermore, it was necessary to keep New Zealand's war effort in the minds of Americans so that New Zealand could eventually speak at the peace conference with the influence its effort deserved. Good publicity, it was hoped, would not only boost morale within New Zealand, but would prepare the way for post-war cultural and trade relations.[38]

Once in Washington, Goddard discussed the RNZAF's needs with General Arnold and with the senior British representative, General Sir John Dill, who confirmed that all aircraft in the British quota would be required for the war against Germany. Goddard was reluctant to contact Admiral King, however, because of King's reputed Anglophobia and his belief that the United States could defeat Japan unaided. When he was invited to explain New Zealand's position to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Goddard spelt out the RNZAF's role in the Empire Air Training Scheme and then went on to say that it was now up to the United States to decide whether this was still appropriate or if it should instead be discontinued in favour of New Zealand expanding its air force to the maximum size possible. He estimated that it would be

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[37] Minutes of the Combined Chiefs of Staff 35th and 36th Meetings, 9 & 13 August 1942, NARA, R.G. 218 Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Decimal File 1942-1945, Box 169 (Combined Chiefs of Staff Meetings 11-69).

[38] Sinclair, p. 222.

possible to expand the RNZAF to 25 squadrons over the next 18 months but this would require about 500 aircraft from the United States. After Dill had once again stated that this could not be done from British quotas, and Arnold reminded the chiefs that this might create a precedent for Australia, King agreed that the aircraft needed to build up the RNZAF could come from the United States Navy.[39]

The exact reasons for King's decision to provide for the development of the RNZAF remain unclear and may have been political or even just pragmatic. Although it seems unlikely that such an astute American officer would be mistaken on this matter, the only explanation Goddard could later think of for this decision was that King misunderstood the nature of the relationship between Britain and its Dominion. Goddard believed King had mistaken him for a New Zealander rather than an Englishman and hoped to help New Zealand towards independence by building up an independent air force.[40]

Sir John Dill hoped that the United States Chiefs of Staff could soon furnish their concept of the complete strategic requirements of the Dominions within American spheres of responsibility. This would be of great assistance to the Dominions in formulating their training programmes. Australia, for example, currently had 30 air force squadrons, but was planning for eventual expansion to 71 squadrons. Dill was sure that once a plan for the expansion of Australian and New Zealand air forces had been formulated, any other concerns would only be of a minor nature. Air Marshal Evill promised that he would arrange for possible solutions to be presented to the United States Chiefs as soon as possible in order to permit immediate assignments to be made to Australia and New Zealand. General Marshall was agreeable to this and added that the United States Army was eager for early air assignments to Australia. General Marshall considered that the problem of air strength in Australia would be relatively easy to solve because Australia could provide a large part of the personnel required. He would also look into the matter of American squadrons being replaced by Australian personnel. Admiral King was also in agreement, but emphasised that any future expansion of Dominion air forces would

[39] Goddard, "Fleet Admiral King's One Mistake", pp. 3-5.
[40] ibid.

depend on the availability of aircraft. The Munitions Assignments Board, King said, should be given as soon as possible a basis on which to assign aircraft.[41]

The Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that what was needed was an early assessment by the United States Chiefs of Staff of the strategic requirements of air forces in Dominion areas in order to set a target for a "reasonably planned expansion of Dominion air forces". At the committee's meeting on 21 August, Evill explained that the sub-committee established to look into aircraft allocations to Dominion air forces had agreed to initial allocations of ten squadrons to the RNZAF and had also examined the possibility of converting certain United States squadrons in Australia and New Zealand to the RAAF and the RNZAF. This would effect overall economy in Allied personnel. The United States Chiefs of Staff agreed to consult MacArthur and Ghormley about the possibility of converting ten American squadrons to the RAAF and six to the RNZAF. Goddard, however, suggested that there had been a misunderstanding because the RNZAF already had 14 trained squadrons, although these were not all equipped. Therefore, this increase of six squadrons over the ten RNZAF squadrons being discussed by the Combined Chiefs, would result in an actual increase of only two more squadrons. Goddard also added that he was aware that any turning over of American aircraft to New Zealand personnel could not take place while squadrons were engaged on active operations, so General Arnold encouraged him to discuss this matter with General Harmon.[42]

Goddard informed the United States Navy and War Departments that through the Empire Air Training Scheme the RNZAF was producing flying and ground personnel "greatly in excess of [its] immediate and foreseen requirements". Even the expansion of the RNZAF being considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff would absorb only a small proportion of this. Three alternatives were therefore presented. Firstly, to reduce the rate of training; secondly, to continue sending the balance of trained personnel to the RAF; and thirdly, to employ these personnel under United States control, either army or navy air force. Provision could be made for the establishment in New Zealand of United States army or navy air units, operational or administrative, assisted by RNZAF personnel in maintenance, repair and overhaul of

[41] Minutes of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Meetings 13 August 1942, 21 August 1942, 4 September 1942, NARA R.G. 218, Box 169, File C.C.S. 334.

aircraft, in technical facilities, and in airfield defence forces. Alternatively, trained air force personnel, particularly ground crew, could be employed elsewhere in the Pacific or even the United States, pending absorption into New Zealand units.[43]

General Arnold informed Goddard that while he keenly appreciated the offer of further assistance from New Zealand, the responsibility for the development of such a plan - if it proved to be feasible - lay with Ghormley and General Harmon and Goddard should discuss it with them on his return trip. A study would be made, Arnold informed the President, to determine the feasibility of accepting New Zealand's offer to place pilots, technicians and groundcrews surplus to British and New Zealand requirements in units of the United States Army Air Forces.[44] At the same time, however, MacArthur informed King that he had "no place" in the South-West Pacific for surplus New Zealand air and ground personnel. MacArthur compared the New Zealand situation to that of the Royal Australian Air Force with its "program of personnel development proceeding faster than airplanes can be supplied."[45]

On 25 August, Goddard told Nash that the New Zealand legation in Washington had discussed the position in regard to transferring a measure of the RNZAF and New Zealand Army to the Commander, South Pacific. It was agreed that a proposition should be made that would be acceptable to the American authorities, to be given to the Prime Minister on his arrival in Washington. After discussion with Admiral King and his Assistant Chief of Staff, Rear-Admiral Charles M. Cooke, it was agreed that a draft paper should be prepared by King's staff. The resulting paper was an amendment to the last paragraph of King's original directive to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area (Nimitz) and placed the embodied and trained forces of the New Zealand Army and the RNZAF indirectly under Admiral Ghormley. "That is to say that the Chief of General Staff and the Chief of

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[42] ibid.

[43] Goddard to Brigadier General Bennet Myers, United States War Department, and Admiral C. M. Cooke, Navy Department, 27 August 1942, Microfilm A1473, File W.P. IV-H-10 New Zealand, Frame 1825-1829, United States Air Force History Support Office, Bolling Air Force Base, Washington D.C..

[44] Arnold to Goddard, 14 September 1942, Microfilm A1473, File W.P. IV-H-10 New Zealand, Frame 1823-24, United States Air Force History Support Office; and Memorandum for the President, 9 September 1942, NARA R.G. 218, Box 238, C.C.S 334 Pacific War Council.

[45] MacArthur to Chief of Staff, 1 September 1942, Abstracts of Policy-Making Messages Affecting the Fifth Air Force (SWPA), p. 29, Microfilm 103-3, Roll 11631, Frame 112-245, United States Air Force History Support Office.

Air Staff will act as Ghormley's subordinate commanders in precisely the same way as they act, at the present time, as independent commanders of their respective forces. Their position will then conform, as regards the local defence of New Zealand, to the existing position of the Chief of Naval Staff." The proposed new paragraph referred to "the local defence of New Zealand" instead of the "land defence of New Zealand". Local defence embodied the sea, land and air defence of New Zealand. The existing arrangement which required the concurrence of the New Zealand Government before New Zealand forces could be moved from their assigned locations by the Commander, South Pacific Area, would be maintained.[46]

The New Zealand government accepted these modifications, but with certain reservations. Firstly, New Zealand would be keeping up its Middle East commitment and the army would remain equipped with British equipment. Secondly, the country had air force commitments to the training programme in Canada and the New Zealand squadrons in Britain. Finally, consultation with the Prime Minister in New Zealand was still required for all future movements of New Zealand forces.[47] Unfortunately, the amendment appeared to the government to do nothing further towards ensuring the supply of aircraft for New Zealand and in fact it seemed likely that there would still be some opposition in the United States to New Zealand's expansion plans being fulfilled from American equipment. Despite Goddard's memories of his meeting with King, it looked as if King still thought New Zealand should be supplied from British sources. The confusion over the writing of the directive could hardly have earned New Zealand much credit with the Americans. If New Zealand had been in serious danger of invasion, or if its army or air force units had been desperately needed, this responsibility would have surely come without qualification under the South Pacific Commander. It appears quite likely, therefore, that Admiral King agreed to an arrangement which did not mean very much, partly because he did not really fear for New Zealand's safety, and also because he had no immediate task for New Zealand units.[48]

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[46] Goddard (New Zealand Legation in Washington) to Nash, 25 August 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/1. See Appendices of this volume.
[47] King to Nimitz, War Diary of South Pacific Commander, 9 September 1942.
[48] NANZ Air 118/81f, pp. 130-135.

Foreign units would present an impossible situation.

(Admiral John S. McCain, August 1942)

Air Headquarters in Wellington cabled Ghormley about the manning of American aircraft by RNZAF personnel. "We hope you may be able to represent to General Harmon the potentialities of the RNZAF", Ghormley was asked. New Zealand could man at short notice four medium bomber squadrons and two single engined squadrons and could make this number fully operational within 12 weeks of arrival of the first consignment of new types. The New Zealand war cabinet was agreed to the disposal and employment of these squadrons according to Ghormley's directions through Harmon. "Our whole object", Ghormley was told, "is to contribute towards war effort in the South Pacific and particularly to participate in offensive operations with American Forces."[49]

Admiral McCain expressed his confidence in the training standard of New Zealand Air personnel and Harmon informed General Marshall on 25 August that he concurred in principle with the plan to equip and maintain ten RNZAF squadrons as long as this did not interfere with the maintenance of existing American units and plans. Harmon felt that medium and heavy bombing squadrons and P-38 Lockheed Lightning fighter squadrons should be completely American due to "long established indoctrination, difficulties of training, high training requirements and delivery of aircraft to area by air with combat crews". Moreover, he wrote, "close association in operation with naval procedure, technique and communications and in co-operation with Fleet Task Forces, as well as unqualified control for strategic mobility in the Pacific Area makes this extremely important."[50]

Harmon still considered Fiji to be the most important strategic position in the South Pacific. While he did not foresee any present intent to attempt the capture of Fiji, its loss through misinterpretation of Japanese actions or underestimation of Japanese capabilities would be "completely disastrous" to the whole effort in the South and South-West Pacific.[51] Harmon felt that the defence of major island bases could not be one of providing impregnable defence against any attack. To do so, he

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[49] Air Headquarters Wellington to Ghormley, 21 August 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/3. Also War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 22 & 25 August 1942.

[50] ibid.

[51] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 3 November 1942.

argued, would mean "the development of the Fijis, New Caledonia, and the New Hebrides into so many Hawaiis", which was "obviously impossible". Each base had to have a garrison force to insure the protection of air and naval facilities for as long as these were needed to defeat the enemy forces in that area. Thus the primary role of ground forces in these operations must be the security of air and naval facilities to permit their freedom of action and their maximum and continuous application.[52]

Even at this early stage of the war, Harmon had very definite ideas about the role of the RNZAF. He did not support a frontline position for New Zealand units for four reasons. Firstly, it would complicate the already difficult logistics problem. Secondly, there was a need to anticipate material changes in the strategic situation in the South Pacific Area. Thirdly, it would deny American units valuable experience in island warfare. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he did not want to neglect "proper consideration of American responsibilities in the Pacific and consequent obligation to develop in our own forces potentiality for offensive island warfare." Harmon recommended to Marshall the development of ten RNZAF squadrons with single-seater fighters, light and dive bombers, observation, transports or flying-boat types with a view to the air defence of New Zealand, reinforcement of principle South Pacific bases and replacement of American units moved forward. Harmon argued, and Ghormley concurred, that the RNZAF might be developed beyond ten squadrons once it had demonstrated its abilities to provide and train this amount. They both also insisted that Ghormley be vested with authority for full control of operations and the disposition of units in forward areas, as well as the movement of units from New Zealand to forward areas in accordance with the requirements of the strategic situation.[53]

Ghormley informed Nimitz that he did not know what Fraser had said to him about the lack of information concerning the Guadalcanal landings, but he had had to talk "very frankly" with the Prime Minister in Wellington. The problem was that the New Zealanders were "so afraid that they will get run into a second Crete that they are very backward about coming forward". Of course, he continued, "they are more curious and can ask more questions ... than anybody I ever knew. They all want to

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[52] Harmon to COMSOPAC, " Estimate Summary - Employment Ground Forces", 25 October 1942, Harmon Papers, Manuscript Archives, United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA.

know everything." The main reason for this, Ghormley concluded was that "they do not want to put their troops into a hot spot [and] some ways you cannot blame them". As for the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff, Ghormley confided to Nimitz that Goddard: "has lots of pep and I think an excellent man but he has no idea, or I do not believe he has any idea, as to how dependent New Zealand forces are on getting help in all directions. In other words you have to more or less hold their hand all the time. I do not believe Goddard realises this because I think the English are probably the same way."[54]

As to the proposal that RNZAF personnel should take over the aircraft of American squadrons moving forward, McCain informed Ghormley that the idea was unsound and no economy would result from it. The plan, he said was "not only swapping horses, but swapping streams also." He would prefer the continuation of American squadrons already experienced in specialised operations in the theatre and any replacements needed because of attrition to come from trained American combat crews. The coordination of Army and Navy air units, he wrote, was already sufficiently difficult. "Foreign units would present an impossible situation." Previous recommendations as to the equipping of RNZAF units had been made on the assumption of a better distribution in the South Pacific of lend-lease material allocated to Britain. Unless the aviation supply situation in the area radically changed for the better, McCain required all combat aircraft for combat, not for training.[55]

On 3 September, a Mutual Aid (Lend-Lease) Agreement, similar to that already signed between Britain and the United States, was signed in Washington by Walter Nash and Cordell Hull. The agreement recognised that the "war production and war resources of both nations should be used by each in ways which most effectively utilise available materials, manpower, production facilities and shipping space". The aim of the agreement was that as large a portion of these articles and services as possible would be in the form of reciprocal aid so that "the need of each Government for the currency of the other may be reduced to a minimum". Until this time, all aircraft for the RNZAF had come from RAF lend-lease allocations. Its

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[53] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 25 August 1942.
[54] Ghormley to Nimitz, 7 September 1942, Personal Papers of Fleet Admiral Nimitz, Series XIII, Folder 14, United States Navy Historical Center.
[55] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 30 August 1942.

Kittyhawks, for example, had come from RAF allotments originally intended for the Middle East.[56]

Early in 1942 all munitions for the Allied forces in all theatres of war had come under the control of the Munitions Assignment Committee in Washington. As the RNZAF had not yet been included in any command, all its demands for aircraft had had to go through the British Chiefs of Staff and be approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for recommendation to the Air Assignment Committee, and then for confirmation by the Munitions Assignment Committee. The types were decided by the Munitions Assignment Committee in Washington and were a compromise between what was available after other areas with higher priority had had their pick, and what was suitable. Now, after the Lend-Lease agreement, an RNZAF Equipment Liaison Office was established in Washington which would forward requests for equipment to the Munitions Assignment Committee. An equipment officer was appointed to General Harmon's staff whose principal duty was to maintain supplies to RNZAF squadrons operating under American command. Requests for British equipment were still forwarded to the New Zealand Liaison Officer in London.[57]

At this stage, Washington had still not officially accepted responsibility for providing operational supplies to New Zealand squadrons, but in practice American commanders in the Pacific recognised that because of the small size of the RNZAF and the lack of shipping available to New Zealand, it would not be practical to establish separate New Zealand supply channels. Colonel Robert G. Breene, Assistant Chief of Staff to Harmon at Noumea, for example, proposed that RNZAF squadrons should be supplied through normal Air Corps channels and charged to Lease-Lend. This was believed to be the "only possible satisfactory solution" and the procedure was approved by both Harmon and Goddard. Initially, at least, New Zealand squadrons in the Pacific were heavily dependent on United States supplies such as 15 Squadron in Tonga which had to rely on American generosity for even the smallest item of equipment. As a result of similar practice by other American commanders in the field, the New Zealand government was under the impression that its forces in the Pacific would be supplied by the United States. However, the War Department still

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[56] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 109, 128; see also NANZ Air 118/32 pp. 70-78.
[57] ibid.

had no intention of supplying New Zealand forces, particularly free of charge, and the only concession officially made at this time was to allow the American commander at New Caledonia to furnish RNZAF units with "common supplies on a reimbursable basis". Major items of equipment were still specifically excluded. As some New Zealand squadrons became more established and more equipment was sent from home fewer services were required from the United States until, by the end of 1942, it was often only fuel and rations that were required. Other squadrons remained more dependent on American supply and services.[58]

At a command conference at Palmyra on 25 September 1942, Nimitz asked McCain for ideas on the employment of "Goddard's outfit." McCain replied that he thought that they should be a "homogenous outfit" capable of operating about 12 Boeing B-17 four-engined bombers as well as medium bombers and fighters. Nimitz agreed, but worried that "to wait for that would deprive us of their present services." McCain explained that he had already asked for 12 of their valuable Hudsons to be sent to the New Hebrides from where six at a time would be sent to operate from Guadalcanal. "The New Zealanders", he said, "will do everything in connection with operation and maintenance of those 12 Hudsons." Nimitz was concerned that they "still would not be getting maximum use of people who can be very useful", but McCain did not think the New Zealanders could furnish any more planes at the time. "There are only 40 left in New Zealand and the government, who would have to pass on the question of more leaving New Zealand, would probably refuse." Nimitz evidently agreed, but continued: "I understand that they have personnel for 14 squadrons right now. Can't we use some of that personnel right now?... Shall we feed their personnel right into our squadrons?... We will promise the New Zealanders to organise their own squadrons when planes are available. By getting our training and indoctrination now, they will be ready for immediate employment when they form their own squadrons."[59]

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[58] The actual negotiations for supply of the RNZAF in the forward area were drawn out and complicated and are more fully recounted in the Official History Narrative "Works and Supply in the Forward Area", NANZ Air 118/32, especially pp. 69, 70-78, 87-88, 92-95.

[59] McCain suggested "12 B-17s; 27 Vfs; and 18 VSBs", Notes on Conference at Palmyra, 25 September 1942, King Papers, Box 3, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center. See Appendix D for the rest of this conversation.

Goddard had already warned the United States Army Department and Navy Office that although he had "no great fear" that the squadrons in New Zealand would not be adequate to deal with minor Japanese submarine diversions in the approaches to Auckland and Wellington, he still had to face his Government, and they would be "hard to satisfy".[60] He had received an urgent call from New Zealand that they needed more Hudson bombers in order to maintain the three squadrons in the islands and the two in New Zealand. The RNZAF was trying to maintain a squadron in Fiji, one in New Caledonia and was now sending a third to Vila (New Hebrides). These were all required to be 18 aircraft plus an allowance for wastage, and the only way this could be maintained was by reducing the strength of the two New Zealand squadrons. Unfortunately, this would leave only two squadrons of obsolete Vickers Vincent reconnaissance-bombers and Goddard thought that the New Zealand government would "not much like my sending the majority of our modern reconnaissance-bombers up to the Islands and leaving very few in New Zealand." The only other possibility would be an increased allotment from the United States or possibly "some other type of similar bomber might be allotted and we could form a new squadron in New Zealand employing the alternative type."[61]

Goddard wanted to discuss the employment and future development of the RNZAF with Ghormley, McCain and Harmon on his return from Washington. He was also concerned with the RNZAF's command and administration, as well as establishing the scope of his own responsibilities to Ghormley and his subordinate commanders for operations, training and administration. "It might be helpful", he told Ghormley, "to be given a directive governing my responsibilities which, presumably, would be subject to my government's approval." Whether this was put on paper or not, he still needed to know Ghormley's wishes clearly.[62]

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[60] Goddard to Captain Glover, United States Navy Office (Plans), 19 September 1942, Microfilm A1473, File W.P. IV-H-10 New Zealand, Frames 1816-17, United States Air Force History Support Office.

[61] Goddard to Brigadier General Orvil A. Anderson, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, United States Army Department, 19 September 1942, Microfilm A1473, File W.P. IV-H-10 New Zealand, Frame 1815, United States Air Force History Support Office.

[62] Goddard to Chief of Staff COMSOPAC, 29 September 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/7.

It is most essential for me to have some general plan which my staff can work to.
(Air Commodore Victor Goddard, October 1942)

In early October, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Committee discussed the conditions under which units of the RNZAF might be assigned for operations in the Pacific Area. Nimitz had written to Goddard to say that even though they had discussed the matter frequently, he needed a "concrete directive ... at the earliest date to cover the prospective employment of the RNZAF as a component of the Allied Armed Forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas.... [to] ensure that all interested parties are fully informed of the exact relationship which is intended." This could only be accomplished upon receipt of "specific advice" from Washington, and subsequent approval from Wellington. Nimitz urged Goddard to impress upon the New Zealand government "both the desirability and the urgency" of implementing this arrangement.[63]

Ghormley also wrote to stress the need for such an agreement, and added as a tentative plan that Goddard should be designated by the New Zealand government as commander of RNZAF forces assigned for operations in the South Pacific Area. He would be under the policy and direction of Admiral McCain while operational command of RNZAF units in the forward areas would be under the local air commanders (except Norfolk Island). The RNZAF in New Zealand and Norfolk Island would remain under Goddard's operational command. While it was desired, Ghormley wrote, "to make full use of the trained air and ground personnel of the RNZAF in our united efforts in this area ... lack of equipment for United States and New Zealand Air Forces at the present time prevents expansion to make the most efficient use of this personnel."[64] New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff agreed in principle to this tentative plan for the transition of command of assigned New Zealand air forces to the United States. They were concerned, however, that there were still no provisions for future planning for the development of the RNZAF and also for satisfactory channels through which equipment could be obtained.

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[63] Nimitz to Goddard, 2 October 1942, New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 148, 8 October 1942, Appendix A, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.
[64] Ghormley to Goddard (no date), New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 148, 8 October 1942, Appendix B, NANZ EA1 81/4/3-3.

On 8 October, Ghormley proposed to Nimitz that all personnel of the American fighter command on Tonga move forward and be replaced by RNZAF personnel who would take over their aircraft and equipment (one squadron of Kittyhawks plus operating reserve). This would then be considered as one of the ten RNZAF squadrons. Although this was agreed to on 12 October, Goddard remained opposed to the allocation of Kittyhawks to New Zealand being reduced by this amount as the assignments committee proposed to do.[65] On the same day, Nash assured Fraser that Harmon was discussing with Ghormley the question of using New Zealand pilots and ground crews in the South Pacific and proposed to continue these discussions with Goddard "with a view to obtaining maximum use of our pilots and ground crews".[66]

Goddard asked Ghormley again for some idea of what was planned for his air force. "I know that no plan for development is likely to be fully realised", he wrote, "but it is ... most essential for me to have some general plan which my staff can work to." Even if that plan would not exactly meet the requirements that might exist at the end of 1943 or 1944, it was essential that the South Pacific Commander's intentions regarding the development of the RNZAF should be known in Washington as soon as possible. Discussions were already being held there to decide the allocation of air forces for theatres of war during the period April 1943 to April 1944 and Goddard was concerned that plans made should not be related exclusively to forces whose roles in various theatres of war were already well appreciated in Washington.[67] As he explained to his staff in Washington:

> Ghormley [has] statement of potentialities of RNZAF with proposals for planning for future development. Suggested ultimate target 30 squadrons of which 20 might be based in operational areas including a mobile group of squadrons armed for offensive action.... I proposed that development plan should be worked out jointly between us and South Pacific command and submitted to Washington as soon as possible having in view necessity for inclusion in joint staff planning

[65] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 8 October 1942; also Ghormley to Nimitz, 8 October 1942, Nimitz Command Summary, Book Two, p. 892.
[66] Nash to Fraser, 8 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/1.
[67] Goddard to Ghormley, 9 October 1942, Rubb Papers, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center.

> 1943/44. Acceptance or otherwise of this plan will affect numbers of trained personnel air and ground to be sent to Great Britain.[68]

Goddard now prepared a set of proposals for the Air Department, as well as for Ghormley and Nimitz, for the development of the RNZAF towards participation in South Pacific operations. In this paper he argued that although RNZAF squadrons, resources and facilities had been effectively diverted into the service of South Pacific operations, there had been no planning in higher United States Staffs for the development of the RNZAF to meet future requirements in the South Pacific. Goddard was concerned that previous allocations of American aircraft had been "stimulated by the British and New Zealand Air Staffs in Washington, consequent upon the drastic curtailment of allotments to Great Britain from which New Zealand would otherwise have been supplied." However, the Pacific was now under United States strategic control for development. Goddard explained that the current strength of the RNZAF was approximately 25,000 all ranks, including 6,000 trained aircrew - many with extensive combat experience, and while the majority of these aircrew were overseas in Europe or Africa, they were all "subject to recall to New Zealand for service in the South Pacific Area." As well as this, there were enough personnel awaiting training to keep up the present output of trained pilots, aircrew and groundstaff, they received a high standard of training and, he argued, "the quality of personnel and their aptitude for their work is probably unexcelled anywhere."[69]

The task now before the New Zealand Air Department was to plan well in advance of the requirements of the United States commanders in the Pacific. Goddard argued that owing to common language and doctrine, as well as proximity to the theatre, it was natural that "a proportionate part of the air strength of the South Pacific Area should be drawn from New Zealand." The continuing problem, however, was that the RNZAF was still equipped from British allocations which had now ceased. The RNZAF operational squadrons were equipped with reconnaissance and fighter aircraft, but not with strategically offensive aircraft, and it was in the offensive role, Goddard argued, that "the fighting qualities of New Zealanders have been best

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[68] Goddard to New Zealand Air Attaché Washington (Group Captain Bevan), 13 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/18/1.

[69] RNZAF: Proposals for Development for Participation in South Pacific War Operations, 9 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.

exemplified." While it would probably not be possible at the present time to implement any large scale re-equipment of the RNZAF, New Zealand wanted a practical plan for the preparation of a "balanced, offensive, mobile air fleet operating as a group of squadrons with ground support and ancillary units under New Zealand command in operational zones of the South Pacific."[70]

Goddard's proposals for the RNZAF postulated an ultimate operational strength of 30 squadrons (excluding those in Britain), of which 20 might be based and operated outside the New Zealand area (deemed to include Norfolk Island as well as the Chatham Islands). The squadrons remaining in New Zealand would be for training, army support and reconnaissance, and the protection of shipping and ports. The 30 squadrons would include heavy bombers, torpedo bombers, dive bombers, fighters, plus "a few squadrons of reconnaissance and patrol planes." During the build-up to this strength, to be reached by April 1944, the RNZAF could contribute all squadrons surplus to New Zealand requirements as "separate units under United States Air Commanders." The RNZAF would also provide personnel for infiltration into American units for instruction in tactics, communications, and organisation, and also to supplement any deficiencies in American squadrons, especially in ground and support staff. Goddard proposed that RNZAF staff officers should be attached to the South Pacific Headquarters, especially the staff of McCain and Harmon, to assist in the formulation of plans, and that planning staff in Washington should also be informed as soon as possible. While Goddard desired that the "nationality aspect" should be minimised, and the unity of purpose and "qualitative potential" emphasised, nevertheless it would be preferable "that the national spirit of New Zealand should be effectively fostered by the retention, as far as possible, of homogeneous New Zealand units and formations."[71]

In reply to these elaborate plans, Ghormley could only say that current operations from day to day made future planning most difficult. While he was aware that long-term plans were necessary so that "we may have a strategic objective to win the war," such policy, he informed Goddard, "must take low priority for the time being". Ghormley continued that that time was a long way ahead, "especially in view

[70] ibid., p. 2.
[71] ibid., pp. 3-4.

of the fact that we must have our immediate needs met or the plans for April 1943 to April 1944 will be of no value whatever."[72]

If this 'Thirty Squadron Plan' is not authorised by the C-in-C, I shall come a cropper with the Government.

(Air Commodore Victor Goddard, October 1942)

It was becoming clear to Nimitz that Ghormley was faltering under the strain of the South Pacific campaigns and a fresh man was needed. Nimitz discussed the matter with General Arnold in September after Harmon questioned Ghormley's management of air power in the Guadalcanal campaign. On 18 October, Vice-Admiral William F. Halsey was informed that he would be replacing Ghormley as the new South Pacific Commander. Halsey's reaction was one of "astonishment, apprehension, and regret, in that order". He realised that Japanese build-up, Allied naval defeats, and command difficulties were bringing on a crisis in the situation and "a new plunge" in morale. However, he had no experience of campaigning with the United States Army, much less with Australian, New Zealand and Free French forces. Furthermore, he and Ghormley had played football together at the naval academy and been good friends for 40 years. Despite this, Halsey had the ability to work well with Harmon and later even with General MacArthur, making the South Pacific headquarters "the first real tri-service combined command in American military history".[73]

Goddard wrote to Nimitz' aviation staff officer, Captain R. A. Ofstie, to explain that he had sympathised with Ghormley's reluctance to get involved in planning matters so remote from immediate operations and had doubted all along whether it would ever be practicable for him to give much attention to the RNZAF's requirements. Other American officers had given him the impression that the South Pacific Command welcomed the prospect of developing the RNZAF for operations in the South Pacific Area, but they did not want RNZAF squadrons being formed instead

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[72] Ghormley to Goddard, 13 October 1942, Rubb Papers, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center.

[73] J. Bassett, "Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey" in M. Carver (ed.) *The War Lords: Military Commanders of the Twentieth Century*, Boston, Little Brown, 1976, pp. 439-440. See also J. Costello, *The Pacific War 1941-1945*, Quill, New York, 1982, p. 354; and D. Haulman, *The High Road to Tokyo Bay: The Army Air Forces in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater*, Center for Air Force History, Washington D.C., 1994, pp. 14-15.

of, rather than in addition to, American squadrons that Washington might be planning to send out. They were willing to make certain recommendations to Washington about the RNZAF, but would prefer that Washington should send them all the American squadrons they could and then do something about the RNZAF on top. In effect, Goddard explained, Ghormley had apparently wished that Washington should do all the planning and have all the responsibility for deciding whether and how the RNZAF was to be equipped and developed. However, his instructions from Washington, from both the Munitions Assignment Board and the Chiefs of Staff, were that demands for all material requirements had to be approved by the Commander of the South Pacific Area, before they would be considered in Washington. So it looked as though one of the American staffs in the South Pacific Area would have to "wet-nurse" the RNZAF and know where it was aiming. Goddard's suggestion was that McCain should have responsibility for operations and operational training policy; Harmon for maintenance and administrative matters; and Nimitz for policy planning.[74]

Goddard did not want to bother the new South Pacific Commander with requests, he explained to Ofstie, "he must have his hands more than full already and any talk about planning for us might make him explode! But, as I mentioned before, matters are getting fairly urgent for me." Goddard had decided to go ahead with his 30 squadron plan. He was persuading the New Zealand Government to let him incur expenditure on expanding the Ground Training Schools, and give him prior call on manpower that would otherwise go to the Army. Goddard had "staked a claim" for 12,000 men over the next year and the same amount over the following year. He had sent demands to England for specialist personnel and a further supply of experienced officers in all ranks and specialties. "If this 'Thirty Squadron Plan' is not authorised by the C-in-C and accepted in Washington, I shall come a cropper with the Government", he told Ofstie, but "that, I am quite prepared to risk." The most serious aspect, however, was still equipment. Not just aircraft, but all other equipment requirements had previously been demanded from London, Ottawa and Washington and these demands been fairly satisfactorily met. "Now the ladder has been pulled up", complained Goddard. "We have no authority to demand anything more unless it

[74] Goddard to Captain R. A. Ofstie, USN, Aviation Staff Officer to CINCPAC, 21 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.

is covered by [Halsey's] approval." Goddard felt that this authority could only be related to an accepted policy and plan and it followed, therefore, that unless Halsey authorised some definite plan, including the continuance of the RNZAF's present training organisation, "the RNZAF will in due course, peter out, because it can get no more supplies!" New Zealand wanted a plan for development based on a balanced mobile air force of 20 squadrons for operations overseas by the end of 1943, and ten other squadrons of all kinds in New Zealand for training and defence. "We can do this", he told Ofstie, "and more if somebody will say OK. Will you? And tell Washington?"[75]

On 21 October, Air Headquarters in Wellington requested that 68 observers and 88 air gunners, preferably with operational experience, be released from the United Kingdom and Canada immediately. New Zealand was now committed to six medium bomber squadrons, four fighter squadrons, one Catalina squadron, and three army-co-operation squadrons by 1 April 1943. In addition there were plans to take over and man "six unspecified American squadrons" and to send personnel to American units for indoctrination or on loan. While Wellington appreciated the Air Ministry's reluctance to release these personnel, they were required by the RNZAF which was now developing towards a 30 squadron plan for the South Pacific Area by 1944. The shortage was due to current commitments in the Pacific and the fact that the remaining air crews in New Zealand were recent graduates and required "considerable training" before being fit for operations. Impress on the Director of Plans, Goddard wrote, "that we are involved in current South Pacific Operations and that above programme is implementing Washington Combined Chiefs of Staff decisions with object of employing New Zealanders in South Pacific operations and thus releasing corresponding number of Americans for United States commitments in other theatres." However, he did not want men from stagnation pools in the United Kingdom because the previous lot had been "disgruntled and dilapidated."[76]

Goddard was happy with the suggestion of taking over the aircraft of American fighter squadrons in the South Pacific as long as it did not affect New Zealand's aircraft allocations. He felt that it was essential to retain in New Zealand

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[75] ibid.

[76] AHQ Wellington to New Zealand Liaison Officer London, 21 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/3.

and Norfolk Island, three and a half fighter squadrons and an operational training unit of 18 aircraft each plus an extra 25 per cent for wastage. This reserve, he considered, should meet normal wastage, but would hardly suffice for minimum battle casualties in the event of a raid on Auckland, for example.[77]

Fraser prepared to send the Minister for Co-ordination of the Armed Forces, Gordon Coates, and a group of senior officers to Noumea for discussions with Halsey during November. Fraser's main concern was with liaison and intelligence. Although New Zealand was situated in, and was providing both bases and forces for, the South Pacific Area it received "literally and actually" no information from the area's headquarters. The only information being received by the government was from press releases and intelligence reports released by the headquarters of the South-West Pacific Area. The New Zealand Government had no desire to receive operational information, Fraser wrote to Halsey, yet if they were to co-operate intelligently and helpfully, "they should have some effective means of keeping themselves in touch with a changing situation." The other issue that was starting to cause concern was manpower. Even as Goddard was urging that the RNZAF wanted to expand, Fraser asked that he be permitted to lay before the Commander of the South Pacific Area a full statement of the manpower position of the Dominion. "Especially", he said, "having regard to recent requests for the dispatch of substantial bodies of troops to various islands in that area, and the difficulty being experienced in meeting demands for food and supplies for United States troops."[78]

When Air Force Headquarters Staff in Wellington were asked what points needed to be raised in these discussions with Halsey, they replied that they required a general endorsement of policy recently proposed to Admiral Ghormley on the future development of the RNZAF for operations in the South Pacific. This policy paper had postulated a 30 squadron plan for the RNZAF to be completed by April 1944. The second concern for the air force was the need for "machinery for authorising demands on Washington for air equipment." The RNZAF wanted closer liaison with the South Pacific Area Headquarters because all demands for air equipment had to have

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[77] Goddard to New Zealand Air Attaché in Washington (Bevan), 26 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

[78] Fraser to Halsey via United States Naval Attaché Captain James P. Olding, 31 October 1942, NANZ EA 1 59/2/12.

Halsey's authority before going through the Munitions Assignment Board in Washington.[79]

On 3 November, Goddard informed Berendsen and Jones that although the Combined Chiefs of Staff had already decided to allot the RNZAF 77 Kittyhawks before 1 April 1943 there was now some confusion over this. The Chiefs had also decided that the RNZAF should take over six United States squadrons in the South Pacific Area at the same time. However, General Arnold told the Combined Chiefs of Staff that neither he nor General Harmon concurred in the proposal to increase the RNZAF by six additional squadrons at the expense of the United States Army Air Force. The British Chiefs of Staff stated their hope that it would be found practicable to transfer aircraft to New Zealand, and Goddard also argued that the proposed transfer of six squadrons would not result in an increase in the RNZAF by six squadrons but would result in the re-equipment of squadrons already equipped with obsolete aircraft. King, Marshall and Arnold all agreed that Goddard should discuss this with the South Pacific Command and had not raised the question of deductions from RNZAF allocations to balance the transfers. Goddard had subsequently discussed the matter of transfers with Admiral Ghormley and Vice-Admiral Aubrey W. Fitch, the new air commander for the South Pacific Area, in the presence of Admiral Nimitz who "strongly supported the idea". He was unable to discuss the matter with Harmon, however.[80]

The visit of the New Zealand delegation to Halsey's headquarters in Noumea was in the government's opinion well worth while. Led by Coates, the delegation included Jones, Berendsen, Puttick and Goddard and was much more successful than the previous visit by the Prime Minister to Ghormley in August had been. Berendsen, who had also been on the previous visit, admitted that its timing had been particularly bad as Ghormley had been preoccupied by the Guadalcanal operations and had been in neither the mood nor the position to conduct discussions with a large delegation of officials on matters which, then at least, were not as important. This time, Berendsen was pleased that the atmosphere had been much better and they had received a warm welcome by Halsey and his staff. Firstly, Halsey readily agreed to accepting a New

[79] Air Force Headquarters to Coates, 27 October 1942, NANZ EA 1 59/2/12.
[80] Goddard to Jones and Berendsen, 3 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.

Zealand liaison officer on his staff. This remedied the dissatisfaction New Zealand had felt with the liaison situation since the South Pacific command had moved headquarters to Noumea leaving only a small group of officers unwilling or unable to make decisions or give information on behalf of the command. New Zealand did not expect strategic information, but felt that some consideration was due, particularly when requests were now being received for the dispatch of forces to the forward area. The delegation also discussed and came to reasonable agreements on questions of censorship, and the difficulties being caused for the government's wage stabilisation programme by United States authorities contracting unloading work at New Zealand wharves at high rates of pay.[81]

Goddard had received a request in October from Halsey via the United States Naval Attaché in Wellington that the New Zealand Government should permit the RNZAF to take over one squadron of 25 Kittyhawks in Tonga. This was done and Harmon informed Washington that the number of aircraft allotted to the RNZAF could be reduced by this number. Colonel Anderson, the Director of Plans at the Army Air Department, reassured Goddard that allocations made by the Combined Chiefs of Staff could only be modified by them. The view held in Washington, however, was that the question of manning United States equipment in the South Pacific by the RNZAF was a domestic matter between Harmon and Goddard. Despite this, Goddard was now disappointed to learn from the Munitions Assignment Committee that RNZAF allocations were to be reduced even though the New Zealand government had not been consulted. He argued that the RNZAF had taken over the squadron at Tonga as part of the agreement to take over the six United States Squadrons which should not be permitted to affect allocation of aircraft agreed by the Combined Chiefs specifically for equipping ten RNZAF squadrons. Even the 77 Kittyhawks promised by the Chiefs would still leave the RNZAF deficient in the New Zealand area for training and for defence. "I do not consider that there has been sharp practice on the part of General Harmon or others in the South Pacific Command,"

[81] Cox to Secretary of State, 9 December 1942, NARA R.G. 84, Wellington Legation Confidential File, Box 1.

Goddard informed Jones and Berendsen, but the matter needed to be cleared up as soon as possible.[82]

Admiral Fitch told Goddard on 6 November that apart from the taking over of the American fighter squadron at Tonga by a New Zealand squadron, and the infiltration of personnel from the Singapore squadron among American Catalina crews, he could think of no immediate further "avenue of usefulness" for New Zealand units in the South Pacific. He did believe, though, that as the campaign progressed, further needs for New Zealand personnel might, and probably would, become apparent. "As you and I well know," he told Goddard, "this employment of New Zealand Air Force personnel is but a drop in the bucket. The crux of the situation lies in the equipment of New Zealand units with aircraft." This was, however, a matter for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Fitch argued, and "completely beyond the purview of this command and probably beyond that of any command in the Pacific area."[83]

Fitch and Halsey were agreed that there was no shortage of United States aircrews, and as a consequence there was "no immediate necessity of further New Zealand aircrews in this area". New Zealand aircrews might be operationally trained against the possibility of a shortage of aircrews in the future, but this should be done on American equipment using American operational procedures. Neither Fitch nor Halsey were prepared to recommend the allocation of aircraft for use within New Zealand as this was not regarded as essential to operations in the South Pacific Area. On the other hand, Halsey said he would not oppose any allocation of aircraft to the RNZAF. Again, however, this was a matter for negotiation between Wellington and Washington.[84]

The RNZAF's representative at Fitch's headquarters, Group Captain Sidney Wallingford, reported that 3 Squadron, operating Hudsons in the forward area (Guadalcanal and New Hebrides), now had more work than its personnel could reasonably cope with. The squadron was performing extremely well, but was being required to undertake twice the number of monthly sorties that were usually expected of a squadron of its size and was in danger of exhaustion unless supplemented from

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[82] Goddard to Jones and Berendsen, 3 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[83] Fitch to Goddard, 6 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

New Zealand. Wallingford was confident that the RNZAF would almost certainly be required in increasing numbers in the area, and replacements of aircraft wastage at Guadalcanal would surely "open the way for a more general consideration of United States aircraft for the RNZAF both in the Pacific and for operational training in New Zealand".[85]

On 8 November, Air Commodore Arthur Nevill, then representing the RNZAF on the New Zealand Joint Staff Mission in Washington, told Goddard that improvisation still appeared to be the keynote of American planning and it was most doubtful whether any proposed detailed allocation for 1943 or 1944 would be approached for several months. Nevill had spoken to Anderson, McCain, and Captain Glover at the Navy Office, about allocations for the RNZAF and believed that the general intention of American planners was to have a 50 per cent increase for both the Australian and New Zealand air forces, bringing the RNZAF to a total of 15 squadrons. This was also confirmed to him by Air Marshal Slessor as being the understanding in London. McCain, however, had indicated that his intention was to press strongly for increased participation by the RNZAF in the South Pacific Area. He hoped the RNZAF would be able to operate three composite groups in the forward zone each consisting of four squadrons of heavy bomber - long range reconnaissance aircraft, long range fighters, dive bombers and torpedo bombers. Unfortunately, Nevill was unable to assess how much weight McCain carried in Washington. It was unlikely in his opinion, he informed Goddard, that the RNZAF would be given the opportunity of manning more than 20 squadrons including those taken over from Americans in the South Pacific Area. As for the 30 squadron plan, the Combined Chiefs of Staff were unable to issue directions on this until the matter has been presented through the usual channels.[86]

On 14 November 1942, Halsey was officially informed that delivery of aircraft and aviation material to the New Zealand Air Force had been limited by combined agreements to ten combat squadrons for the period ending April 1943. Now under consideration in Washington was the question of allocation of aircraft production to the various United Nations allies for 1943 and Halsey had been assured that New

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[84] Wallingford to Goddard, 10 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/8/4.
[85] Wallingford to Goddard, 15 November and 8 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/8/4.

Zealand now considered itself "capable of training air and ground personnel up to 30 squadrons for service in the South Pacific and would prefer to employ them in that area rather than continue to send them overseas to European and African theatres". Indications were, however, that even with an increase in its allocation there would only be enough aircraft for a grand total of 15 RNZAF squadrons by April 1943. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were informed of this and asked how many squadrons they would deem necessary for local defence so that the rest could be used in the South Pacific. Any further increase in allocations of material to New Zealand would have to be offset by a corresponding decrease in allocations to other services in the South Pacific, and Halsey was unlikely to agree to this. Halsey was asked to give his views on the matter and give an estimate of attrition based on a strength of 15 squadrons - "having in mind your plans for their employment" - while New Zealand's Washington representatives were looking into the subject.[87]

Soon after, Fraser again brought up the question of the withdrawal of 2 Division from the Middle East. In view of the growing manpower difficulties and New Zealand's increasing commitments in the Pacific area, he told Churchill, it was felt that the place for the New Zealand Division might be in the Pacific. Now that New Zealand's land and air forces had been placed under Halsey's command, heavy demands would be made on the Dominion in personnel and material. Parts of a division for service in the Pacific was already proceeding to its several destinations and, furthermore, the RNZAF would now be being trained and equipped for offensive action. "For some time now", Fraser told the British Prime Minister, "a large proportion of our limited force of modern aircraft has been operating in Guadalcanal, Espiritu Santo, and other Pacific islands. New Zealand is now endeavouring to complete preparations for an air force of 16 squadrons to serve in the Pacific, with an ultimate aim of achieving a force of 30 squadrons." Churchill reiterated that it would cause him "much regret to see the New Zealand Division quit the scene of its glories". He understood New Zealand's position and the need to respond to American opinion, and agreed that the British Chiefs of Staff should review the whole situation.[88]

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[86] Nevill to Goddard, 8 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[87] Nimitz Command Summary, 14 November 1942, Book Two, p. 984.
[88] Fraser to Churchill, 19 November 1942, Churchill to Fraser, 24 November 1942, *Documents,* Vol. II, pp. 142-145.

It will be wrong to send these potential air personnel into the Army.
(Air Commodore Victor Goddard, 25 November 1942)

On 25 November, Goddard cabled the New Zealand mission in Washington that he was most disappointed with current plans to increase the RNZAF to 15 squadrons. He had just been in conference with Harmon, Fitch and Halsey, about responsibility for the RNZAF and the terms of his directive. Fitch had not been instructed by Ghormley or Halsey, that he had any responsibility for RNZAF squadrons even when participating in operations under his command. His meeting with Goddard, therefore, began "frostily", but agreement was eventually reached. Fitch agreed to accept planning responsibilities for the RNZAF, and Harmon on matters except operations and policy. The two also agreed to the terms of Goddard's directive which was now only awaiting Halsey's approval. Fitch had received definite word from the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, however, that while the Navy Department recognised New Zealand's desire for a 30 squadron air force, expansion would only be approved from ten operational squadrons to 15 during 1943 and 1944.[89]

Goddard believed this showed "persistent misunderstanding" of his position which he believed stemmed from a Combined Chiefs of Staff paper which "disregarded altogether RNZAF squadrons which were not already equipped with modern aircraft." The RNZAF currently had 16 squadrons in New Zealand and in the islands, six of which were wholly equipped with obsolete aircraft but were still in fact "trained combatant squadrons with all the organisation and experience required for operating modern aircraft excepting the relatively simple matter of conversion." The proposal to expand from ten to 15 squadrons would not absorb the output of trained air and ground personnel up to 1944. "The whole object of our determination and the American agreement that that output should be absorbed in South Pacific operations instead of being sent to Europe is thus frustrated."[90]

Although aware that the number of aircraft available for the Pacific would ultimately depend on requirements in Europe, Goddard suggested that the Combined

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[89] Goddard to New Zealand Air Mission Washington, 25 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1; and Goddard to DCAS, 22 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/4/7.
[90] Goddard to New Zealand Air Mission Washington, 25 November 1942.

Chiefs of Staff should formulate a maximum and a minimum plan for the RNZAF, the maximum being the 30 squadron plan. He hoped that New Zealand's air mission in Washington would impress on McCain and also Evill, the potential of the RNZAF, the difficulty of maintaining squadrons with obsolete aircraft, and the needs for the future organisation of the RNZAF in New Zealand and the Pacific. Unless some definite guidance or instruction on these matters was given by Halsey or from Washington, Goddard believed:

> the plans for expansion which we have made must be abandoned and we must revert to the Empire Air Training Plan for sending out all our surplus trained personnel to Europe. This course is undesirable in the interests of New Zealand and is uneconomical as regards shipping. But it is nevertheless most desirable that all personnel eligible for air training should be trained as rapidly as possible and employed in air operations. It will be wrong to send these potential air personnel into the Army or alternatively to allow them to stagnate.[91]

Group Captain Bevan, head of New Zealand's Air Mission in Washington, replied that the Americans were only "lukewarm" in support of the RNZAF. They were agreeable to an increase to 15 squadrons, based on attrition of 100 percent per year in rear areas and 25 per cent per month in active zones, provided that allocations to other American services would not be affected. Admiral McCain, who was now head of the Aeronautics Bureau in the Navy Department, had been doing his utmost to obtain further allocations for the RNZAF out of any surpluses that might arise and, after having "to fight the United States Army and the whole British Empire aircraft by aircraft", had been able to gain provisional approval for 63 dive bombers, 63 torpedo bombers, a further 12 flying-boats and possibly a further 30 medium bombers. McCain was also interested to know whether any progress had yet been made on his recommendation that RNZAF personnel be loaned to United States Squadrons in forward areas in order to familiarise them with United States tactics and general operational procedure. Nash was planning to see Admiral King shortly to discuss RNZAF expansion and also the general employment of New Zealand military forces in the South Pacific. He already had the feeling that the Americans had no real desire to expand and utilise the RNZAF to immediate advantage, and the result would be

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[91] ibid.

that both the RNZAF and the New Zealand Army would be relegated to the equivalent of forward garrison duty.[92]

Nash told Fraser at the same time that Air Marshal Slessor, who was acting for the United Kingdom Air Mission in negotiations with General Arnold about the next year's aircraft allocations, had advised him that New Zealand should not press for allocations in 1943 beyond the squadrons provisionally promised. Nash believed that Bevan was making a good case for what could be obtained. However, although he had no direct evidence to support his views, Nash was satisfied that "with some minor exceptions the general disposition here is to limit operations in South Pacific and to confine active service in the area to members of the United States forces. This will not prevent them from using our forces, but only if necessity arises." Nash was not sure, but believed that King appeared to be following a general policy of confining Pacific activities to his own force.[93]

Bevan believed that any pressure applied to increase allocations to New Zealand would cut across the agreed strategic policy of bringing maximum impact to bear upon Germany and for offensive operations in the Pacific to be strictly limited. Detailed discussions with the United States Joint Planners could not be held until the main question of the allotment of American aircraft between the United States and Britain was settled. This was due to happen shortly, but in the meantime it appeared that there would not be sufficient aircraft to re-equip and expand the RNZAF. Evill, however, was of the opinion that the position would be greatly relieved by May 1943 due to increased production and due to the fact that the Americans would realise that they were incapable of implementing the expansion of their air forces to the extent they were currently planning. British and Dominion allocations were due to be considered in March and April and until then his advice to New Zealand was to continue planning on a 20 squadron basis.[94]

Despite Nash's warning, Goddard informed the war cabinet that he believed Admiral Fitch had not previously been greatly interested, but would now take an interest in the development of the RNZAF. Goddard was also convinced that Admiral

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[92] NZ Air Mission Washington to Air Headquarters Wellington, 30 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[93] Nash to Fraser, 29 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[94] Bevan to Goddard, 29 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2-vol. 1.

Halsey agreed with the New Zealand point of view. Goddard felt that both now recognised that "the expansion of the RNZAF does not imply any reduction in the strength of air forces available for operations in the combat zones." He was concerned, however, that Nash now proposed to see Admiral King in regard to the employment of New Zealand forces in the operational zones. Goddard had requested that Nash delay this meeting until the Prime Minister could consult with the war cabinet and advise Nash on moves to be made. "I feel sure," he wrote, "that the War Cabinet will wish to retain policy control and advise Mr. Nash on any policy representations to be made from time to time." Goddard was also concerned that an "unfortunate impression" might be made on Halsey if King were to inform him of pressure from Nash so soon after the recent discussions between Halsey, Coates and the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.[95]

On 4 December, Goddard informed the government that indications were that he would be allocated modern aircraft to equip 18½ squadrons for 1943. (This would be made up of five medium bomber squadrons, two torpedo bomber squadrons, four dive bomber squadrons, four and a half interceptor fighter squadrons, two flying-boat squadrons and a transport squadron.) This was an increase on previous indications, and Goddard now considered that further pressure on this matter at the time would not be beneficial. He now proposed to modify existing planning to a target figure of 20 squadrons by October 1943. The RNZAF would be able to equip 20 squadrons using the new allocations as well as by employing obsolescent and training aircraft for the army co-operation squadrons, which he believed were playing a useful part in army training and a valuable reserve of trained personnel for any future expansion.[96] When the allocations for the Dominion air forces for 1943 were decided by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, New Zealand reiterated its aim of an ultimate strength of 30 squadrons and along with Australia and Canada agreed to them with the hope that additional allocations would be made should the year's production be greater than predicted.[97]

Goddard informed Bevan that he had not desired to stimulate any change in general strategic allotments, but had aimed solely to obtain a larger proportion of

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[95] Goddard to Bevan, 30 November 1942; and Goddard to Jones, 1 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.

[96] Goddard to Jones, 4 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.

South Pacific allotments for the RNZAF on the grounds of economy. He was also concerned that Nash thought he had reduced his 30 squadron plan to 20, but hoped that Bevan would point out that this was only an interim measure. Goddard hoped to have 20 squadrons by April 1943, and 30 squadrons by April 1944.[98] At the same time, he assured Slessor that he had not intended to stimulate any change of strategic policy or strategic allocations. He had instead wished to force the Americans to enable New Zealand to deploy larger air forces in the Pacific as a measure of economy, by deflecting a larger part of South Pacific aircraft allotments to the RNZAF for offensive employment in the combat zone. Goddard believed that the South Pacific naval commanders were willing to use all New Zealand could offer but seemed "determined to damp down our development lest it might reduce the expansion of American forces". His desire to be recognised as subordinate commander under Fitch was to force Fitch to exercise responsibility and support for the whole of the South Pacific; air deployment, employment and development. Nimitz had agreed fully to this policy and instructed Halsey two months previously to issue a directive governing Goddard and Fitch's responsibilities, but so far none had been issued despite repeated assurances from all concerned. "I still have no instructions", complained Goddard, but "I am confident Nimitz will soon settle the matter if Halsey does not during forthcoming visit to New Zealand."[99]

McCain now advised Goddard that it would be better not to bother Fitch and his staff further on the details of employment of RNZAF personnel in United States squadrons for indoctrination. Instead, he would arrange to attach additional technical personnel to American squadrons in the islands and instruct RNZAF squadron commanders to arrange, by personal contact, with their American colleagues for these people to be employed as supernumeraries in United States squadrons. "I feel sure", he told Goddard, "that if this is done on not too large a scale, it will prove to be beneficial to all concerned and involve no administrative inconvenience."[100]

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[97] Combined Chiefs of Staff Paper 114/1, 21 January 1943, and notes on C.C.S. 55th meeting, 22 January 1943, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 549, File ABC 452.1 Section 3.
[98] Goddard to Bevan, 5 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[99] Goddard to Slessor, 10 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[100] McCain (By this time at the American Department of Aeronautics in Washington) to Goddard, 7 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

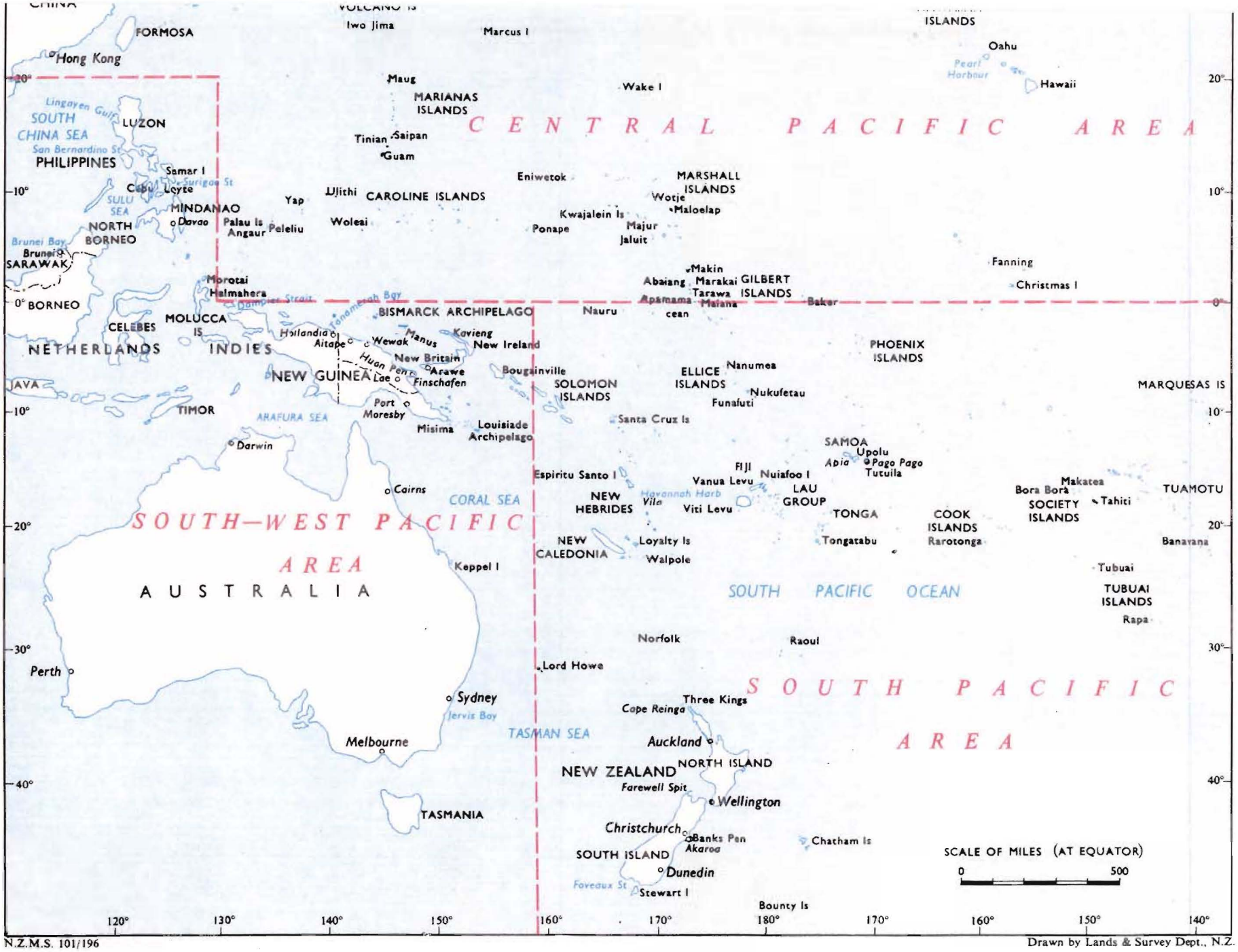
On 16 December, Goddard informed Bevan that Halsey was agreeable to an increase of the RNZAF to 15 squadrons by April 1944 provided allocations to other services were not thereby decreased and provided that the priorities of other services as dictated by changing strategical and tactical situation were in no way jeopardised. Halsey was assuming that nine squadrons would be based in New Zealand and six in the forward area of which two would be continually employed in active combat zone. Goddard was concerned because, not only was the figure of 15 squadrons too low, but it showed that the South Pacific command believed that an increase in the RNZAF would mean a reduction in its potential and secondly that Fitch had not faced up to his responsibility for determining the strength of air forces which should be maintained in New Zealand. Goddard argued that Fitch had no need to be "scared of defensive mindedness" in New Zealand. In order to satisfy him, Goddard only needed to be told by Fitch what he wanted. As it was, he could not tell if Fitch was opposed to RNZAF development because he under-valued New Zealand squadrons or because he was "scared of asking New Zealand to cut down local defence in New Zealand for fear of refusal." Meanwhile Britain's Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, had asked New Zealand to support its squadrons in England by supplying 1,760 ground personnel and so relieve the acute manpower problem there. Goddard had agreed to comply as far as possible if the government agreed, but admitted that this posed a real "teaser" for him.[101]

On 20 December, Halsey informed the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff that he was not at all clear as to "the necessity or even advisability" of a directive such as that earlier proposed by Goddard. His sole purpose was to establish the most simple and practicable system of command relationships possible consistent with the directives under which he operated and with "due regard to national rights and sensibilities." In matters concerning the RNZAF and the defence of New Zealand, Halsey desired to deal with the Chief of Air Staff, and for matters concerning units of the RNZAF in the South Pacific Area, but outside New Zealand, operational command would rest with "local commanders under appropriate and established seniors, subject to the policy and directives formulated by the Commander Aircraft, South Pacific." In larger matters concerning such detachments, Halsey or his representative would deal directly

[101] Goddard to Bevan, 16 December 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.

with the Commander RNZAF, or such commander as might be designated by him. The New Zealand units already operating in the forward areas, the Admiral added, had "demonstrated a very fine spirit and ability." Once again, the American commander was not interested in taking responsibility for the training and administrative organisation of the RNZAF in New Zealand. Goddard would retain responsibility for the operational control of any United States squadrons which might be based in New Zealand and also, to ensure "economy of effort, simplicity of administration and communications, and safety," responsibility for co-ordinating all air movements into and out of New Zealand.[102]

[102] Halsey to New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 20 December 1942, WWII Administrative History Appendices, Operational Archives, Navy History Center, Folder 34(16(J)) "Wellington".



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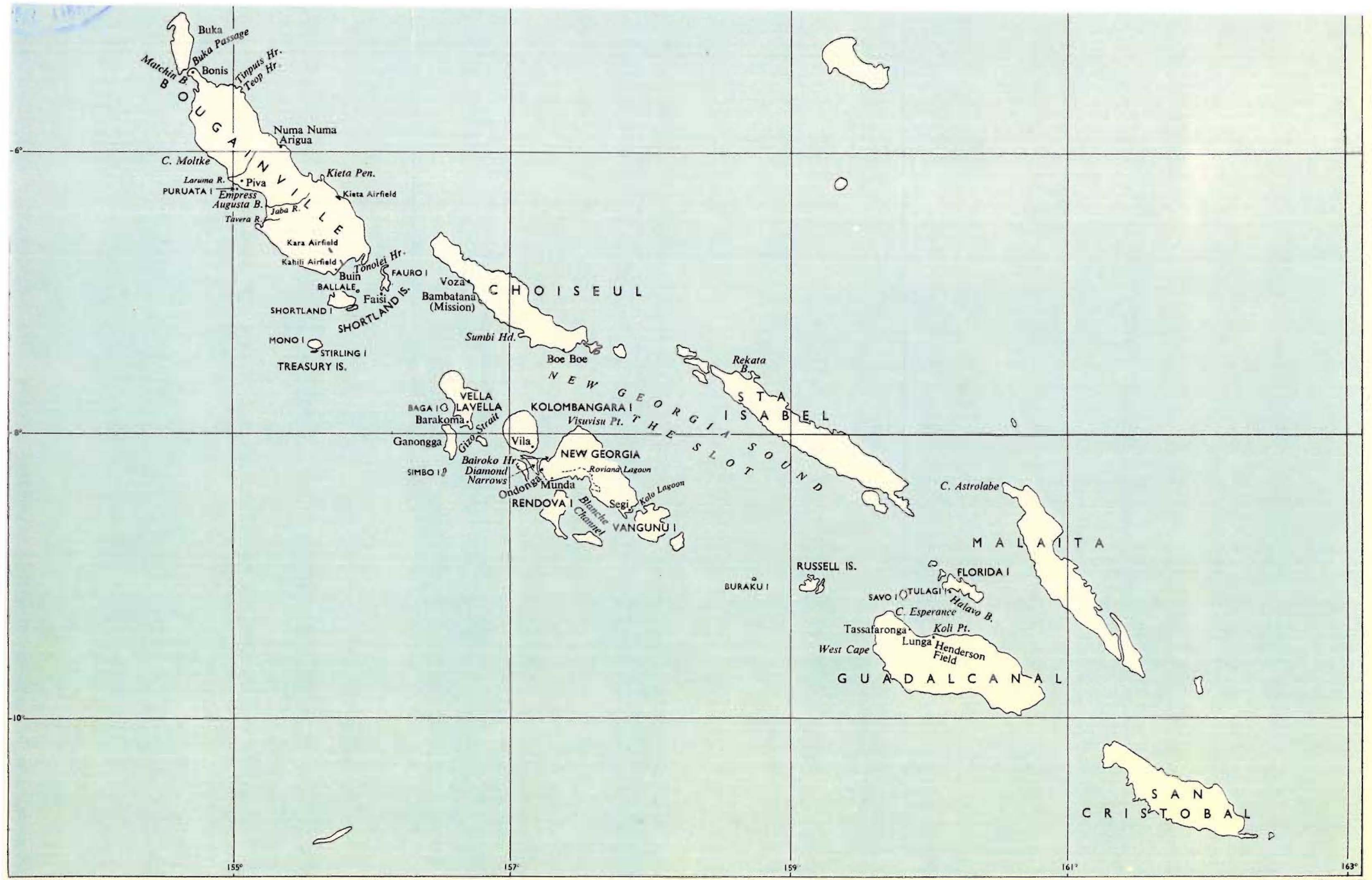
South-west Pacific



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THE SOLOMONS

Chapter Four

The Solomons Campaign

The only difficulties we have laboured under is the writing of a directive that will meet the requirements of our own forces plus the more or less 'Jackass' command setup we have to go through when dealing with the New Zealand government.

(Admiral William F. Halsey, 11 January 1943)

Early in January 1943, Admiral Halsey was able to make a four-day visit to New Zealand. "I am long overdue there and believe it is necessary for me to go and show myself", he told Nimitz. "I would much rather not, but believe it is up to me."[1] In his account of the Admiral's visit, the American Chargé d'Affairs, Raymond E. Cox, reported to Washington that it had been an outstanding success. The Admiral had made a "profound impression" on the Prime Minister and other officials who had been anxious to meet the South Pacific Commander. Most importantly the visit had "served to dispel any stray feeling the New Zealanders may have had that their country is too small and insignificant to matter."[2] Halsey informed Admiral Nimitz that he had found the New Zealanders "a very charming, hospitable, and informal people and very easy to get along with". As for their air force, he continued:

> the subject of Goddard is now more or less in your lap.... There has never been any desire to do anything with the New Zealand Air Force except have them fight. We are well aware of their sterling worth as air fighters. The only difficulties we have laboured under is the writing of a directive that will meet the requirements of our own forces plus the more or less "Jackass" command setup we have to go through when dealing with the New Zealand government. The difficulties are not insurmountable and will be very easily ironed out as soon as we obtain their ideas on the subject. Get us the planes, Goddard said he will supply the pilots, and we will fight them.[3]

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[1] Halsey to Nimitz, 1 January 1943, Personal Papers of Fleet Admiral Nimitz, Series XIII, Folder 14, United States Navy Historical Center.

[2] "Visit to New Zealand of South Pacific Commander", 6 January 1943, NARA, R.G. 59 General Records of the Department of State: Decimal File 1940-1944, Box 5116, File 847H.20111/1.

[3] Halsey to Nimitz, 11 January 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 15.

On 18 January Goddard conferred at length with Nimitz regarding the command set-up for RNZAF units operating in the Pacific theatre outside New Zealand. At a conference in Noumea between Nimitz and Halsey several days later, the matter was again discussed along with the future employment of the RNZAF. Unity of command in the Pacific areas, and the subsequent changes in directive which made Halsey responsible for the defence of New Zealand through the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, were discussed in detail. Halsey argued, however, that the New Zealand Government had never notified him of what forces had been assigned for the country's defence, and what remained for use in the Pacific. This was despite his having written to the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff a month previously. Nimitz then asked to see copies of all correspondence with the New Zealand government and to be informed when a reply had been sent to Halsey's letter. When you receive a reply, he instructed Halsey, "make a specific request for forces you want, and tell them how you are going to employ each unit. Then you can devise the command set-up."[4]

Anomalies and ambiguities in the organisation of command.

(New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, January 1943)

At the end of January, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff again wrote to Halsey that both they and the New Zealand War Cabinet desired that a directive in general terms be issued by him to the commander of the RNZAF. Admiral King's original directive to Nimitz had specifically laid down that all armed forces in the South Pacific Area would be under his command. Nimitz' directive to the air commander for the South Pacific, however, had stated that while all aircraft in the area would be under his control, he would not be responsible for the land defence of New Zealand, and this Admiral Fitch took to include the RNZAF. The New Zealand government had expressed its "surprise and disappointment" at the time and upon investigation, it was discovered that there had indeed been a misunderstanding and that Admiral King had not intended the RNZAF to be excluded. King was willing to have the RNZAF under his command and, after the New Zealand government formally concurred, the directive was changed. As a result of all this, the commander of the RNZAF became

[4] Nimitz Command Summary, Book Three, p. 1348.

constitutionally a subordinate commander under the direction of the Admiral, Commanding Aircraft, South Pacific.[5]

The problem for the New Zealand chiefs was that the existence of the RNZAF as a third fighting service created "anomalies and ambiguities in the organisation of command". They were concerned that for some purposes, Goddard would have to look to General Harmon and for others to Fitch or even directly to Halsey and his staff for co-ordination between the two. There was in fact, they told Halsey, "no single authority charged by you with full responsibility for all matters of policy, disposition of units, development, supply, movements and operations. Nor does it appear practicable for the Commander, Aircraft South Pacific, to assume full responsibility." It was for this reason that they considered it most desirable "that a directive to the Commander, RNZAF, should demarcate responsibilities in general terms" not only for Goddard's guidance, but for the responsible American commanders as well. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff stressed that they did not want the matter to be a source of embarrassment to Halsey and were only anxious to see the most simple channels of command introduced. They did, however, consider it most desirable that command should be exercised through the responsible commanders rather than through the Chiefs of Staff Committee.[6]

Although the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff desired that Goddard be entirely regarded by the Americans as a subordinate commander, they were also aware that he had a "dual responsibility" in that he was constitutionally responsible to the New Zealand Government. In this, it was Goddard's position that was similar to that of General Freyberg commanding 2 Division in the Middle East, rather than the Commander of No. 1 (Islands) Group who was "responsible only for general supervision and co-ordination". Freyberg's 1940 charter made him responsible to the New Zealand Government for the "maximum usefulness of the Division to the Allied war effort for the minimum casualties". However, according to one assessment Freyberg's job was complicated by his "continuous and time-consuming" effort to combine the role of "military politician" with that of operational commander, something which Goddard did not, strictly speaking, have to do. Halsey was informed

[5] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff to Halsey, 30 January 1943, WWII Administrative History Appendices, Folder 34 (16(J)), Operational Archives Navy Historical Center.

that he should exercise "full powers of command" either directly or through his commanders, and that the New Zealand government only wished to be consulted in regard to questions which involved the movement of formed RNZAF units out of New Zealand "contrary to any existing approved policy for the disposition of units." He was also assured that the New Zealand government would wholeheartedly welcome policy direction and any recommendations from him on this or any other matter concerning the RNZAF.[7]

Goddard was pleased that he had been able to meet with Nimitz, Halsey, Fitch and McCain, to discuss allocation of aircraft and equipment for New Zealand squadrons, and with the opportunity it had given him to develop a liaison with the responsible United States commanders. As for his directive, Halsey explained to him that the delay in reaching a decision had been partly due to the fact that certain material papers which had been handled by Ghormley during his tenure of command had subsequently been mislaid and were not available to him until very recently. Whether or not this reflected the level of importance the Americans placed on matters concerning New Zealand, Goddard did not comment. Even now, he explained, "there was some difficulty in defining responsibility owing to the uncertainty regarding the higher United States Air Commands in the South Pacific Area." However, Goddard still entertained the hope that these "uncertainties" would soon be removed and a directive promulgated.[8] During a meeting at the same time to discuss plans for forthcoming operations in the South and South-West Pacific, Admiral King had emphasised to Nimitz that the main purpose of the limited operations during 1943 was "to protect our own lines of communication and to attack those of the Japanese". Although he was still awaiting a statement of plans from General MacArthur, King

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[6] ibid.

[7] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff to Halsey, 30 January 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/4/7. On the position of the Officer Commanding No. 1 (Islands) Group see Directorate of Organisation and Staff Duties (DOSD) Organisation Memorandum Number 78, 22 March 1943, NANZ Air 106/7; for General Freyberg's Charter see *Documents,* Vol. I, pp. 31-32. On Freyberg: L. Barber and J. Tonkin-Cavell, *Freyberg: Churchill's Salamander*, Auckland, Century Hutchinson, 1989, pp. 3-4, 260. Despite resistance from Puttick, Barrowclough also had a similar charter; Major-General Harold Barrowclough interview with J. T. Henderson, November 1969, and *Documents,* Vol. III, Appendix V, pp. 553-555.

[8] "Statement from Chief of Air Staff on Visit Abroad", Schedule No. 1 of the Minutes of the 110th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee held on 24 February 1943, NANZ Air 1 105/3/3 vol. 3.

also believed it was essential that the Solomon Islands campaigns be continued "if for no other reason than political".[9]

A formal directive was consequently issued by Halsey on 25 February 1943, which stated that Goddard was subject to the policies and directions established by Admiral Fitch. All military forces of New Zealand in the Pacific were now officially under Halsey's command. The only exception was that command of forces engaged in the local defence of New Zealand, including any land based American aircraft operating in the New Zealand area, would be through the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff subject only to Halsey's strategic direction. Command of forces stationed elsewhere within the area would be through the direct chain of military command applicable to the location or task force involved. Formed units of the RNZAF would not be moved out of New Zealand except under specific orders from Halsey after consultation with the government. Goddard, as RNZAF commander, was directed to communicate directly with Fitch, or if he agreed, with General Harmon, or higher authority. As for the problem of supply, this would still be made in accordance with existing or future agreements of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Requests for supplies or material other than aircraft (and maintenance supplies) could be submitted through the Fleet Aircraft Commander at Noumea.[10]

Goddard was still not entirely happy with his directive and during a visit to Espiritu Santo, discussed amendments with Admiral Fitch in order to "clarify more accurately the extent of United States responsibility for the RNZAF". Goddard's main concern was that although he was subject to the "policies and directions" established by Fitch, no such policies and directions had actually been given regarding RNZAF squadrons in New Zealand and this was what he had wanted. Goddard was also concerned that when he had been in Washington, he had negotiated with Admiral King and General Arnold that the combatant part of the RNZAF should be under American command for employment, development, and training, but that the assigning of forces out of the country should remain the responsibility of the New Zealand Government through the Chiefs of Staff. There was also a need to distinguish

[9] Notes from Conference between King and Nimitz, 21-23 February 1943, NARA R.G. 38 Strategic Plans Division, Series III Box 64.
[10] Directive by Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force to the Commander Royal New Zealand Air Force, 25 February 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/4/7.

between the "combatant part of the RNZAF" as compared to the training organisation for the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The amended directive was finally agreed by Halsey and the New Zealand Chiefs on 7 July 1943.[11]

By March 1943, the Japanese had evacuated their forces from Guadalcanal which was not only a valuable base for the Americans, but the "first foot of ground taken from an enemy who [had] some cause to consider his armies invincible".[12] In the neighbouring South-West Pacific Area, the Papuan peninsula had been secured by American and Australian forces. General Douglas MacArthur now commanded the operation codenamed CARTWHEEL. His forces would move up the eastern coast of New Guinea to a point parallel with New Britain, then move onto the end of the island, while Halsey's forces advanced up the Solomon Islands chain to Bougainville. Halsey was commanding South Pacific forces (including the RNZAF) within the South-West Pacific Area and was therefore responsible to his own commander, Nimitz, as well as to MacArthur. For the RNZAF, Group Captain Sidney Wallingford was appointed staff officer to the South Pacific Air Command, to provide liaison between the American command and the New Zealand units in the field. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff informed Halsey that, with the approval of the war cabinet, they had recommended the retention of only two bomber-reconnaissance and two fighter squadrons in New Zealand for local defence and the employment of the rest in forward areas.[13]

Fitch assured Goddard that the New Zealand squadrons in his area were continuing to function "with their usual efficiency" and he looked forward to a time when it would be practicable to employ them on more combat missions. One report said that considering the number of missions assigned to the New Zealand reconnaissance crews and the number of aircraft available, they were doing "a remarkable job". Goddard attributed American officers' positive comments to the fact that New Zealanders naturally had an "above average" aptitude to flying and had superior British-style training which, he believed was better than the United States Army Air Forces and in some respects even than the United States Naval and Marine

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[11] Notes on proposed amendments of Directive to Commander RNZAF, 2 June 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/4/7.
[12] Ghormley to Nimitz, 1 September 1942, Nimitz Command Summary, Book Two p. 862.
[13] War Diary of the South Pacific Commander, 6 March & 31 July 1942.

Air Forces.[14] Fitch approved of the proposals to equip the RNZAF and assign its squadrons forward, but expected to regulate the details of movements himself according to the strategic and tactical situation. Moreover, he expected to be advised by Goddard and Wallingford on this matter. For example, it now appeared desirable to assign a New Zealand squadron with the United States Carrier Air Group 11 based at Nadi, and at Wallingford's suggestion Fitch had arranged to move 15 Squadron to Nadi where it would be equipped with "the pick of the P-40Es" coming up from New Zealand. Fitch told Goddard that he was "anticipating with considerable optimism" the advent of a co-ordinated carrier group in the combat area and believed its effectiveness would be considerably increased by the assignment of 15 Squadron. He also suggested that the First Marine Air Wing, which was due to be evacuated to New Zealand soon for rehabilitation might include an aircraft carrier and patrol squadrons and provide an opportunity for the RNZAF to train with an American carrier group.[15]

As it became obvious that an increasing number of RNZAF units would be operating in the area, it was decided to expand Wallingford's staff and establish a headquarters to administer them. No. 1 (Islands) Group Headquarters was formed at Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides on 10 March 1943 under Wallingford, who was promoted Air Commodore, and made responsible for the operational efficiency of units under his command. Operational orders would still be issued directly to the units concerned by the American commanders to whom they had been allocated although it was expected that Wallingford would still have some voice in their employment and so retain indirect operational control. Towards the end of the year, he was replaced by Air Commodore Maurice Buckley who found that the Americans had held Wallingford in great esteem. Furthermore, the Americans were "a great crowd of chaps. They generally do their best for us, and really treat us as members of the family." New Zealand also appointed Colonel Cedric Salmon to be accredited to Halsey's South Pacific command to serve as a channel for the communication of information concerning activities, plans and policies. However, Goddard remained unhappy with the level of air liaison in New Zealand, especially as the RNZAF was so

[14] Goddard to RNZAF Station and Group Commanders, 1 March 1943, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-1; and Report of American military attaché "New Zealand Air Operations South Pacific", 3 April 1943, NARA R.G. 38, Entry 98, Box 56.
[15] Fitch to Goddard, 18 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 2.

dependent on American supplies and still hoped that representatives of the responsible American air commander could be appointed to Wellington.[16]

When the RNZAF originally moved into the forward area there had been no intention that the organisation should include any works or construction personnel and units sent overseas often had to prepare primitive facilities for themselves under active conditions. Despite Air Department reluctance, and the country's growing manpower problems, New Zealand construction and maintenance personnel began to be sent out with units during 1943. Compared to the tremendous scope of the United States war effort, the tasks that New Zealand asked for assistance with sometimes appeared trifling. These projects were often quite large compared to New Zealand resources, but may have caused impatience to American commanders, despite undertakings made half a world away in Washington. In addition, American co-operation was greatly stimulated by the giving of presents and the New Zealanders had no presents to give.[17]

The establishment of a Group Headquarters, and indeed much of the administrative organisation in the Pacific, was sometimes criticised during the war as a waste of manpower. It was pointed out that it would have been more economical if New Zealand squadrons had been formed and worked entirely under American administration and become, in effect, American units. The RNZAF official history argues that this would have been impractical given the difficulties caused by the vast distances between different units, and even between sections of the same unit, which were heightened by the fluid nature of the war. Moreover, even if the Americans had wanted such a system, it would have been bad for New Zealand and RNZAF morale. "The South Pacific war", Ross concluded, "vitally concerned New Zealand, and national sentiment would not have permitted men to be sent to fight under a foreign flag, no matter how close and friendly was the feeling between the Allies."[18]

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[16] Minutes of New Zealand Chiefs of Staff 111th Meeting, 12 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 105/3/3 and Buckley to Isitt, 12 December 1943, NANZ Air 100/4, for a detailed account of the establishment of No. 1 (Islands) Group, see the official history draft "No. 1 (Islands) Group" NANZ Air 118/40.
[17] NANZ Air 118/32 pp. 106-110.
[18] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 160-162, 171.

The concept that New Zealand's defensive preparations can be limited to her geographical boundaries must no longer be seriously entertained.
(New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, April 1943)

Throughout the Pacific War, the Allies kept in mind the shape of the post-war Pacific. On 24 March 1943, New Zealand was informed that Britain had been asked by the American State Department whether any consideration had been given to the question of the use of military airfields after the war. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs suggested that "in view of the present potentialities of aircraft", a strong defence of the British Islands in the Pacific was important to the Americans, and this would shortly be being discussed between Britain and the United States. New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff reminded the government that this was a vital concern to New Zealand which had already been actively involved in the defence of the South Pacific, especially in the development of a military airfield in Tonga and large naval and air facilities in Fiji, in the lead up to war. "New Zealand's interest in these facilities", the Chiefs argued, "will not cease when the war ends. The concept that New Zealand's defensive preparations can be limited to her geographical boundaries must no longer be seriously entertained".[19]

The Chiefs of Staff argued that the ring of islands to the north of New Zealand must be securely held, and the naval and air bases which had been developed there must be maintained and even possibly expanded. They felt that the interests of the United States would be primarily in the Central Pacific, especially after the defeat of Japan yielded island bases there. The South Pacific islands would, therefore, remain of particular importance to New Zealand, while New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Dutch East Indies would remain vitally important to Australia. The major defence interest in the Pacific south of the Equator, the Chiefs argued, belonged to Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, sovereignty to the islands south of the Equator should not be surrendered and, as the sovereign powers, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, should be responsible for providing and maintaining defence facilities and making these available under some mutual arrangement for the use of forces of friendly powers. New Zealand was also aware that the question of mutual use of military facilities was "intimately associated" with

the future of civil aviation in the Pacific. A trans-Pacific service had been developed by Pan American Airways prior to the war, but all endeavours to organise a British service had failed because landing facilities could not be secured at Honolulu.[20]

It was now proposed that a British Pacific air service be established, based on a mutual agreement between Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. The agreement on Pacific air services, it was hoped, would be part of a major agreement settling the general question of the operation of air services throughout the world. It would provide for a service between Australia, New Zealand and Canada via Honolulu with feeder services from New Zealand to New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, and perhaps the Cook Islands. The chiefs argued that there was "no doubt" that the United States would press claims in the South Pacific, especially seeking lease agreements in Fiji and Tonga. However, in order that Australian, New Zealand, and British interests in the Pacific should not be over-borne by the United States, it was "essential that agreement should be reached as soon as possible between the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia".[21]

The American Legation in Wellington were somewhat concerned when Carl Berendsen was appointed as the first New Zealand High Commissioner in Australia. Whereas Berendsen was well-informed on all matters of New Zealand's external and British Empire relations, Cox believed that Berendsen's replacement, C. A. Jeffery, had been given the job as a reward for faithful service to Fraser. According to Cox, Jeffery had no special aptitude or experience in dealing with foreign affairs, or qualifications to advise on policy matters, and the Legation would have to deal in the future with more junior officials of the Prime Minister's Department. Of these officials Alister McIntosh, then First Secretary (Diplomatic) of the Prime Minister's Department, was well known to the State Department as being a very "capable young man, frank and co-operative" as well as being decidedly pro-American after a Carnegie fellowship to study there in 1932-1933.[22]

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[19] Schedule No. 3 of the Minutes of the 114th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held on 7 April 1943, "Mutual Use of Military Airfields After the War", NANZ EA 1 81/4/2a-3.
[20] ibid.
[21] ibid. On the growing Commonwealth-American competition for post-war commercial air routes in the Pacific see D. Day, *Reluctant Nation: Australia and the Allied Defeat of Japan 1942-45*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 165-170, 245-249.
[22] Cox to Secretary of State, 23 March 1943, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5115, File 847H.00/122.

On arrival in Australia, Berendsen reassured the Australians that New Zealand remained united in spirit with them. Although Australia's problems were "larger and more complex than ours in New Zealand", nevertheless they were "in essence ... identical". Those responsible for global strategy had insisted on Australia and New Zealand being in separate commands, and the two countries had sunk their individual views because of the danger of the situation. However, Berendsen told the *Evening Post*, there was still room for close consultation and collaboration, especially when the time came to push back Japan. Then Australia and New Zealand would fight "as they liked to fight - side by side".[23]

New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff were aware that the situation in the Pacific had changed substantially over the last six months. At that stage, the Japanese had been holding on to Guadalcanal and there was every possibility of a major attack being staged to drive the Americans out of the island. That attack had not occurred and the Japanese had instead withdrawn their forces and were now on the defensive in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea and, in fact, throughout the South and South-West Pacific. Even the development of a new offensive policy by Japan, the Chiefs of Staff argued, "could not seriously menace the integrity of New Zealand for a prolonged period.... such a menace could not be developed except in the unlikely event of Japan securing naval dominance in the Pacific." The United States was withdrawing forces from rear areas and lines of communication and concentrating them in more forward islands and, if New Zealand was threatened, the construction of airfields between the South Pacific islands and New Zealand would permit the rapid concentration in any threatened area of air forces for both offensive and defensive purposes.[24]

With the war cabinet's approval, Halsey was informed that New Zealand would reduce its requirements to two squadrons of Hudsons and two squadrons of Kittyhawks for local defence and operational training duties. These squadrons would be responsible for the protection of important shipping in New Zealand waters against submarines or raiders, protection of Auckland and Wellington, and the defence of Norfolk Island, as well as acting as reserves for the bomber-reconnaissance and

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[23] "Australia and New Zealand United in Spirit" *Evening Post*, 9 March 1943, Australian Archives A462/7 439/1/25.

[24] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 160, Air Strength in New Zealand, 1 March 1943, NANZ EA 1 81/4/3 pt. 4.

fighter squadrons in the Pacific. In addition, the RNZAF would maintain an Operational Training Unit or "nucleus squadron" of each type of aircraft being used, and six flights of Harvards for army co-operation and anti-aircraft training. There would also be a transport squadron to service army and air force units in the Pacific. Depending on the allocation and supply of aircraft from the United States, of course, this would leave New Zealand with a total of 12 squadrons available for service in the forward area during 1943. It was hoped that these would form a well-balanced force made up of three squadrons of Kittyhawk fighters, three of Lockheed PV1 Ventura medium bombers (to replace the Hudsons already serving), two squadrons each of Douglas Dauntless and Grumman Avenger dive-bombers, and two squadrons of Catalina reconnaissance flying-boats. The New Zealand Government was committed to manning and training these squadrons and hoped that the United States would provided adequate staff liaison to ensure that the organisation, training and material maintenance of the squadrons forming in New Zealand would be in accordance with United States standards and requirements.[25]

Halsey had officially informed New Zealand in February that the American Navy Department approved delivery of aircraft and aviation material for ten RNZAF combat squadrons by April 1943, and 15 by April 1944. He now expected that New Zealand would be prepared to furnish adequate personnel to man these squadrons as aircraft were received, and to train them effectively. Once New Zealand was sure of the number of squadrons deemed necessary for local defence, Halsey could make plans to employ the surplus in the South Pacific.[26] He was also short of radar equipment and technical personnel, and asked New Zealand to supply as much as possible from its own resources. The radar equipment was to be delivered to Noumea, from where it would be shipped wherever it was needed in the forward area, along with New Zealand technical officers to service it and train American operators.[27]

Unfortunately, New Zealand would have to look to London for help in manning this increased numbers of squadrons as immediate aircrew requirements were "beyond New Zealand's training resources". The Flight Training Schools were

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[25] ibid., Appendix B pp. 3-5.
[26] Halsey to New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 9 February 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 3.

producing enough pilots to keep up with the scheduled deliveries, but New Zealand would require 300 wireless operators, air gunners and observers returned from England or Canada before the end of the year.[28]

There was also some confusion at this time about New Zealand ministerial visits to the Pacific front. For example, an earlier request by Coates to visit RNZAF establishments in the New Hebrides and Guadalcanal had been declined by Halsey, but a visit by Nash was approved by Nimitz. Coates was very highly regarded by the Americans and described by Halsey as "a very fine gentleman" who should naturally feel he had "more right to visit his own fliers than has an accredited minister". Cox believed that besides Fraser and Nash he was the only man of outstanding ability in New Zealand political life.[29] Nimitz assured Halsey that he was fully justified in denying his request as a matter of safety to Coates and the avoidance of interference with United States operations because Guadalcanal was at that time still considered in the front line. However, the situation had now materially changed so that Nash could be permitted to visit. As a matter of policy in dealing with New Zealand officials, Nimitz instructed Halsey to accord them "such courtesies regarding visits to forward areas as a reasonable regard for their safety and non-interference with operations will permit." Nimitz continued that he believed New Zealand officials should be given as much opportunity as is practicable to visit areas in which they have an interest. "New Zealand", he confided, "has made, is making, and will continue to make a very vital effort to participate in the South Pacific War. Their willingness to participate has won for them a very friendly feeling in Washington with our high military and naval authorities."[30]

Goddard informed Halsey's deputy, Rear-Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson, that he and the other two Chiefs of Staff were concerned about United States representation in New Zealand. "We feel very strongly", he wrote,

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[27] Halsey to Fraser, 30 March 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 13.
[28] Air Department Wellington to RNZAF Headquarters London and New Zealand Air Mission Ottawa, 31 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/10/3.
[29] Halsey to Nimitz, 25 March 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 15, and Cox to Secretary of State, 9 June 1943, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5115, File 847.00/126.
[30] Nimitz to Halsey, 3 April 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 15.

> the need for a focus of representation in Wellington. There are so many authorities and so many requirements which come our way which appear to lack central co-ordination. I believe that the present arrangement does result in tolerably satisfactory results in the matter of getting things done on behalf of United States forces. But it lands us in a good number of embarrassments when we find that arrangements have been made, without our knowledge, which conflict with our own arrangements in developing [a] force for employment under South Pacific Command.

Goddard felt that he was not getting the assistance, advice and support he needed to produce exactly what the Americans expected from New Zealand. He hoped that Wilkinson would be able to discuss this matter with General Harmon or even come to New Zealand at some time.[31]

When Goddard suggested an air officer from the South Pacific Headquarters staff might serve with him in connection with the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, Admiral McCain, who admitted he took "a very great interest in the development of the New Zealand Air Force", discussed the matter with Halsey. He apologised to Halsey for intruding, and realised that aviators were "scarcer than hens' teeth" so there was nothing he could do from Washington, but wondered if Halsey could spare "some war weary Marine or Navy flyer, or perhaps an Army Colonel" to be detailed to New Zealand. "New Zealand Air Forces", McCain suggested, "should be equipped with some rapidity, beginning about July, and I believe you will get value returned from the services of such an officer."[32] Halsey had already been approached on this matter by Goddard, and decided that it was not worthwhile to assign an officer of the necessary rank and qualifications to the job. He was, therefore, not favourably impressed by Goddard's taking the matter up again with McCain. Goddard was a subordinate of him and Fitch in the South Pacific Area and all the necessary representations and decisions had already been made at South Pacific Headquarters. "That is not to be construed as a back-hand swipe at you", he informed McCain, but "there has been a tendency on Goddard's part repeatedly to step outside of his

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[31] Goddard to Wilkinson, 18 April 1943, WWII Administrative History Appendices, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center, Folder 34 (16(J)).

[32] McCain to Halsey, 14 April 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 14.

bailiwick a little bit in pursuing what he considers to be the interests of the New Zealand Air Force."[33]

Events were further complicated at this time by an equipment shortage. Colonel Salmon, New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff Representative at the South Pacific Force Headquarters, was informed by Wellington that the RNZAF currently had two Hudsons grounded and seven more to be grounded before the end of the month, as well as ten Kittyhawks expected to be in the same position because of a lack of spare parts. RNZAF engineers had also had to suspend the overhauling of American aircraft in Hamilton for the same reason. Considering the small number of aircraft being operated in the forward area, the percentage of grounded aircraft was becoming very high. Even the very small supply that had arrived from Noumea had been so badly corroded after the ship carrying them struck a reef, that the spares had proved practically useless. Wellington did not mind if spares were shipped from the United States or the Pacific Islands, as long as some arrived soon.[34] Two weeks later, Salmon was able to report to Wellington that after discussions with Colonel Robert G. Breene (on Harmon's staff) and Squadron Leader Cecil Franks, the RNZAF equipment liaison officer at Noumea, arrangements had been made to meet the situation. Firstly, 20 sets of cyclone major overhaul spares would be allocated from Tontouta and sent out on the first available shipping for RNZAF Hudsons in New Zealand. In addition, 30 more sets would be sent to complete the current overhaul programme of American B-17s, after which this work would cease in New Zealand. Secondly, 50 sets of Kittyhawk Allison engine spares had already been ordered from the United States, and were due to arrive before the end of the month.[35]

This Frankenstein of an Air Force.

(Alister McIntosh, May 1943)

Early in May, Alister McIntosh, now Secretary of the newly-formed Department of External Affairs, wrote to Colonel William Stevens, previously secretary of the New Zealand Organisation for National Security and now Officer in Charge of Administration with 2 Division in the Middle East, that the Prime

[33] Halsey to McCain, 28 April 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 15.
[34] Air Department Wellington to Salmon, 3 April 1943, NANZ, Air 1 113/3/2.

Minister's personal position regarding New Zealand's war effort was both difficult and delicate. "In the first place", McIntosh wrote, "he does not know which is the right thing to do - to sacrifice the Pacific Division or the Mediterranean Division - because clearly we cannot maintain both, plus this Frankenstein of an Air Force and the semblance of a home defence force, the maintenance of which is dictated by politics." By this stage, manpower was the over-riding factor although personal appeals from Churchill and Roosevelt would hold great weight. McIntosh was for "sticking by the British to the bitter end"; however, New Zealand no longer had the manpower to maintain two divisions as well as an air force that would soon reach over 40,000 in size. The army had also had an unexpected call made upon its manpower by the air force. Because of political clamour the government was reducing the home defence force by 25,000 and had let out all the 18-19 year olds. This had an instant and adverse effect on air force recruiting because "parents whose boys volunteered for air crew argued [that] if the boy next door was going to university for a couple of years why shouldn't their son." The air force was forced back to the army pool for their drafts.[36]

The problem was that within the next few months, one of the divisions would have to be reinforced from the other. McIntosh divided the problem of the Pacific Division into two parts - immediate and remote. To take reinforcements from the Pacific would reduce 3 Division to two Brigades and therefore severely restrict its chance of taking part in active operations. If this were the case, the division's commander Major-General Harold Barrowclough, and the men themselves would be "furious, if not in fact mutinous", at having wasted months on "this wretched island" (New Caledonia) for no other purpose than to act as a garrison force. On the other hand, the government was anxious to avoid malaria while at the same time aware of the need to be very careful not to let the Americans think New Zealand would prefer to have troops fight in comparatively healthy areas and have them suffer from tropical diseases for New Zealand's sake.[37]

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[35] Salmon to New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 16 April 1943, NANZ, Air 1 113/3/2.
[36] McIntosh to Stevens 14 May 1943, McIntosh Papers, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Archives (MFAT) Wellington, STE 1/43/006.
[37] McIntosh to Stevens 14 May 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, STE 1/43/006.

From the long term point of view, McIntosh was aware that there was much to be said in favour of New Zealand retaining a division in the Pacific. The Pacific, he argued was "our area" and the security of New Zealand and its island territories was involved. New Zealand had to ensure that when the future of the Pacific was being considered after the war it was in a favourable position and "British elements" in the United Nations forces in the Pacific should be as strong as possible. Part of these, of course were the RNZAF which, if the promised equipment was supplied from the United States, would have considerable forces operating in the Pacific. Even McIntosh agreed that this might perhaps be sufficient "to entitle us to claim a say and a share in what is decided in the Pacific area - both now and in the future."[38] A few days later, McIntosh confided to Berendsen that the Prime Minister was "still in a complete dither" and was relying on the arrival of telegrams from Churchill and Roosevelt. Even so, he felt that the matter was more likely to be decided by the opposition than the government.[39] Fraser also confided to Berendsen that there was "much to be said for our standing by Britain to the very end". He was well aware of the morale implications for the men of 3 Division, and also the likely reaction from the Australians, but felt that New Zealand could still play "no small part in offensive operations" with its air force. "This effective form of assistance", he told Berendsen, "could and should in fact entitle us to claim a say and a share in what is decided in the Pacific area both now and in the future."[40]

Distribution of New Zealand Forces, September 1943[41]

	New Zealand	Pacific	Europe and Middle East
Army	33,453	21,792	33,607
Navy	6,029 (incl. Pacific)	-	2,617 (with Royal Navy)
Air Force	30,567	3,460	6,682 (RAF & RCAF)

[38] ibid.
[39] McIntosh to Berendsen 17 May 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, (no reference number).
[40] Fraser to Berendsen, 15 May 1943, R. Kay (ed) *Documents on New Zealand External Relations (Volume 1) The Australian New Zealand Agreement 1944*, Wellington, 1972, pp. 25-27.
[41] Adapted from Gillespie, p. 110

The outgoing head of the United States Lend-Lease Mission to New Zealand, Roy I. Kimmel, was of the opinion that New Zealand's whole contribution to the war was misdirected and he was sure that many influential Americans and New Zealanders felt the same way. New Zealand's great military mobilisation since Pearl Harbor was virtually ineffective from a military point of view, Kimmel told the head of the Lend-Lease programme, the American industrialist and later Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius. The New Zealand army did not have the facilities for proper training and some of the officers sent out from Britain to assist had been less than ideal with the result that there were now too many men in New Zealand's armed forces who were either physically unfit or too old for fighting. Kimmel found that New Zealanders as a whole had grown complacent about the possibility of invasion, and many vital industries were running well below capacity. However, there appeared to be no disposition amongst the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff to release men from the armed forces back into civilian production. This would only happen, Kimmel believed, if the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington and London indicated clearly to New Zealand what was wanted and a definite production programme was established. New Zealand presently held no concept of total war as it was beginning to be understood in the United States, but could easily produce more than enough food of all kinds for American forces in the Pacific. "With relatively few additional facilities and a different manpower policy", Kimmel argued, "the potentialities of New Zealand as a source of food supply are tremendous."[42]

When it was suggested in Washington that Lend-Lease officials should contemplate a considerably less liberal policy towards New Zealand as a lever to increase New Zealand food production, Cox, and Kimmel's replacement, Blackwell Smith, argued that this policy would cause indignation and bitterness and would defeat its own purpose. New Zealand's high military and aid contributions to the United Nations' war effort were well known and had frequently been referred to by American officials. Irrespective of whether or not New Zealand could contribute more, Cox argued, these statements were also well known and had been taken at face value. The New Zealand government had indicated to him that it would welcome

[42] Roy I Kimmel to Edward R. Stettinius, 23 March 1943 and 3 June 1943, contained in Cox to Secretary of State, 22 June 1943, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5117, File 847.24/227. On food production see

some lead on whether supplies or combat forces should be given priority and Cox had no doubt that New Zealand would try to comply with any clear policy directives it was given along these lines.[43]

On 21 May 1943, the government made the crucial decision that the New Zealand Division would stay in the Mediterranean. The decision pleased the British and Americans, but not the Australians. Despite the fact that Australia was still well represented in Europe, especially in the RAF, New Zealand's Pacific strategy from now on would be considerably different from Australia's. The Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, argued that the immediate defence of New Zealand was in the Pacific Ocean. "For every soldier New Zealand keeps away from the Pacific theatre," he said, "either an Australian or an American [would have] to fill his place."[44] After a very difficult interview with the Australian Prime Minister, Berendsen warned the New Zealand government that relations between Canberra and Wellington had received quite a jolt, although hopefully nothing had been broken. Now that the two countries were definitely and presumably permanently taking divergent paths, it would be difficult to maintain the very close liaison between them that had been hoped for. Curtin felt it was essential that there should be substantial Australian and New Zealand collaboration with the Americans when the time came to drive the Japanese back and was concerned that both forces would be so reduced by casualties and attrition by that time that they would be unable to play their part. The only solution was for Australia and New Zealand to retain all their diminishing resources for the Pacific.[45]

Fraser asked Berendsen to assure Curtin that this decision was not based on any under-valuation by the New Zealand Government and Parliament of the importance of the Pacific situation and that New Zealand was "at all times anxious and willing to co-operate with Australia to the full extent of our resources". Fraser also reminded him that as well as the cruisers *Leander* and *Achilles*, New Zealand had

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also Cox to Secretary of State, 4 August 1943, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5117, File 847H.24/274.

[43] Cox to Secretary of State, 10 November 1943, NARA R.G. 84 Wellington Legation Confidential File 1943, Box 2.

[44] Kay, *Vol. I*, p. 37.

[45] Berendsen to McIntosh 5 June 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, Ber 1/43/018. On Australian manpower see R. Deane, "The Balancing Act: The Australian Government and the War in the South-West Pacific, 1944-45" in G. Wahlert (ed.) *Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South-West Pacific: 1942-45*, Canberra, Australian Department of Defence (Army), 1995, pp. 7-10.

19,000 soldiers serving in New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, and Norfolk Island plus 28,000 airmen in New Zealand and 3,000 in the Pacific. "We feel", he told Curtin, "that our 18-squadron programme, for which allocations of aircraft have been promised, will constitute a considerable New Zealand contribution to the striking power and defences of the South and South-West Pacific".[46]

The Australians were not entirely popular in Wellington, however, when only a week after New Zealand's decision, Curtin announced in a speech that the threat to Australia had been removed. "Has there ever been a time in your experience", McIntosh asked Berendsen, "when we have attempted to collaborate with the Australians that we have not had just cause for complaint?" McIntosh had never felt that New Zealand had anything to gain by teaming up with Australia and did not believe that military collaboration between the two countries was possible. "I am as certain now as I ever was", he argued, "that our rightful place is in the South Pacific - paddle our canoe as best we can." There was also a growing feeling that when the war in Europe finally drew to a close, New Zealand and other British forces could be combined for the final assault on Japan, and for "political reasons" McIntosh hoped and believed that this would be the case. As he told Berendsen: "I don't see why we should not be able to play our part in the Pacific war when the European fracas is over."[47]

Throughout the rest of the year, MacArthur and Halsey advanced on Rabaul. Their forces met fierce resistance from the Japanese on land and in frequent naval and air battles but as each objective was taken by the Americans, air bases were quickly built up to enable bombing on the next objective and then on Rabaul itself. While the South Pacific Command was essentially naval, strategic direction of approved South Pacific operations had now passed from Nimitz to MacArthur. Halsey commanded naval operations through the commanders of the task forces which were set up for each objective and then disbanded afterwards. Halsey commanded air operations through Fitch, and army units were administered by Harmon. Supply services for army and navy were separate but resources were generally pooled. Command of air

[46] Fraser to Berendsen, 22 May 1943, Kay, *Vol. 1*, pp. 31-35.
[47] McIntosh to Berendsen, 17 June 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, Ber 1/43/022.

forces in each island or group of islands was exercised by a single air commander who might be sailor, soldier or marine.[48]

At this stage, the RNZAF was nominally under American command. In New Zealand (and Norfolk Island), it remained under the New Zealand Air Board, while Goddard was designated by the government and by Halsey as the Air Officer Commanding RNZAF and received operational and training policy direction from Fitch. RNZAF units in the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Fiji, and Tonga were comprised in No. 1 (Islands) Group RNZAF and Wallingford, and after him Buckley, retained full administrative control. Goddard estimated that the total strength of the RNZAF in the South Pacific at this time was 27,000 men of whom 3,000 were actually in the islands (including maintenance units, detached flights, signals and radar units). Goddard also believed that there were now two major American air transportation systems operating in the Pacific, for the United States Army and Navy, and warned the government that these were actually the Pan American and United Airlines civilian systems "in disguise". The RNZAF operated an air transport service through the South Pacific Islands for the RNZAF and the New Zealand Division, as well as ferrying its own aircraft from the American West Coast and Pearl Harbor.[49]

In June 1943, approval was given from Washington for all RNZAF squadrons operating United States army or navy type aircraft to be treated for supply as if they were American squadrons. The Mutual Aid Agreement had paved the way for the RNZAF to receive lend-lease aircraft directly, instead of from British allocations. Now, although they serviced their own aircraft, once New Zealand units were in the field most of their equipment came from local American stores depots.[50] During this phase, two more RNZAF bomber reconnaissance squadrons began operating in the area, and 15 Squadron, flying new Kittyhawks, became New Zealand's first fighter squadron to operate from Guadalcanal. This was followed by 14 Squadron and later in the year by another three squadrons. Although the Kittyhawk was the oldest Allied fighter plane engaged in the area, the New Zealanders earned a reputation as skilful and disciplined fighter pilots. They were engaged in fighter patrols, island defence

[48] Goddard to Nevill, 16 June 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[49] ibid.

and bomber escorts and eventually 99 confirmed and 15 probable kills were officially claimed. As in most theatres, precise statistics are controversial and those accepted were usually exaggerated. For his part the official historian, Squadron Leader John Ross, merely laments that the opposing team "retired from the field [and] the New Zealanders never had the opportunity of reaching the century".[51]

On 3 June, Admiral Wilkinson met with the New Zealand Cabinet to discuss the future of 3 Division. Fraser pointed out that New Zealand had reached exhaustion point and had only a few Category A men left with whom to meet the country's commitments. While he accepted that the country's resources were insufficient for all its overseas commitments, Wilkinson hoped that the Pacific Division would not be disbanded altogether even though it would not be needed for active operations during 1943. Priority in the Pacific was first for air force, second for navy and thirdly for army. Although forces in the South Pacific were reliant on New Zealand supplies which made up half of all rations, Wilkinson did not agree with the argument that industry was more important than the army. The Admiral expressed a strong desire that New Zealand's air force commitment should be fulfilled, even at the expense of other commitments if necessary. He and Halsey both felt, and Fraser was inclined to agree, that New Zealand's home defence establishment could safely be reduced to zero to supply manpower for industry and overseas.[52]

Fraser told Raymond Cox that he was impressed by Wilkinson who was one of the most able and perceptive United States officers he had met. Moreover, Cox felt that Wilkinson's visit had made a distinctly favourable impression on the government and public alike. However, he suggested to Wilkinson that the South Pacific Command should be represented in New Zealand by one central authority with which New Zealand authorities and the American Legation could deal on administrative matters touching the command. Cox was concerned that New Zealand authorities, institutions and individuals were constantly bringing administrative questions of all kinds to the Legation because of a lack of such an authority and this was resulting in delays and uncertainties. Wilkinson informed Cox that he and Halsey intended to

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[50] NANZ Air 118/32, pp. 92-102.
[51] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, p. 243.
[52] McIntosh to Berendsen 9 June 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, Ber 1/43/020. See also Fraser to Halsey, 30 August 1943, *Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 404-406.

designate an officer of appropriate rank to Wellington as soon as possible. Wilkinson hoped this officer could work alongside the Legation's naval attaché, Captain James P. Olding, who was "an exceptionally dependable and capable officer, highly regarded by the New Zealand civil and military authorities".[53]

General Barrowclough was brought back to Wellington from Noumea for consultations and was reported to be "completely outraged" at the turn of events and inclined to grizzle at what he considered was the "shabby treatment meted out to the Third Division". Barrowclough's main point was the morale of the division, which had gone through all sorts of privations in the expectation of shortly going into action. He believed that they were a much finer body of troops than any of the Americans and that socially the Americans were inclined to point out that they were defending New Zealand, "with the result that ears were thickened and eyes were blackened, and a little blood was apt to run." Barrowclough hoped that the division might be allowed one campaign, and then have the situation re-examined in four or five months time.[54]

Early in June, Wallingford wrote to Air Commodore Leonard Isitt, who would soon replace Goddard as Chief of Air Staff, asking if the changing over of squadrons in the forward area could be left to him, as they had to be fitted in with the movement of other units and with local requirements. While he agreed with the Air Department's wishes to extend the aircrew period as long as possible, he also felt that these periods should vary according to the work on which the aircrew were employed. For example, Wallingford believed that 15 Squadron, which was about to return home to New Zealand after its first tour of duty on Guadalcanal, had not had such a bad time that it was necessary for them to be sent back. "While their work has been good", he told Isitt, "they have not done anything particularly outstanding, and as you will remember, they were inclined to be a recalcitrant lot while at Tonga." Wallingford admitted that they had behaved very well since leaving Tonga, and that their long overseas flights had been performed very efficiently. However, the Americans had been making such flights with single-engined aircraft ever since they came into the war.[55]

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[53] Cox to Secretary of State, 9 June 1943, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5115, File 847H.00/126.
[54]McIntosh to Berendsen, 16 June 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, Ber 1/43/021.
[55] Wallingford to Isitt, 4 June 1943, NANZ Air 100/4.

Wallingford was glad that 15 Squadron had not really been fully "blooded" because they had been unfortunate in being the pioneers, and having to put up with improvised camps from Tonga, through Nadi, then Espiritu Santo and finally at Guadalcanal. Their replacements, 14 Squadron, had been luckier to arrive at a more settled camp just before the beginning of operations, and claimed several kills in their first weeks. When it was suggested that the fighter squadrons be given a publicity boost upon their return home, Wallingford said he had no objection, but did not want it to be overdone in fairness to the "steady and efficient plodding" of the bomber-reconnaissance crews, who had really earned a high reputation for the RNZAF in the Pacific.[56]

McIntosh also told Berendsen: "our airmen are doing great things up in the Solomons." In the last week, 15 Squadron had claimed four Zeros without loss to themselves and 14 Squadron which had just relieved them, claimed six Zeros with one loss. Goddard was "very bucked" because the Americans had always said that Kittyhawks were no match for Zeros. New Zealand pilots had been warned that their main danger in the early stages of the conflict, the Mitsubishi A6M fighter (Zero), was fast, extremely manoeuvrable, and could easily out-climb a Kittyhawk. It was lightly armoured, however, and could take very little punishment. The Zero would go up in flames if the petrol tanks, which were not self-sealing, were hit while Allied fighters, such as the Kittyhawk, could take a good deal of punishment and still manage to get home.[57] The Prime Minister, however, was upset because the Americans would not give him permission to publish the news. The government was still waiting for permission from the Americans to tell the public about an incident in which a RNZAF Hudson had sunk a Japanese submarine two months beforehand, and a strongly-worded telegram was now being sent to Admiral Nimitz.[58]

Isitt informed Wallingford that the newly equipped Ventura squadrons would be moving into the forward area about September. The PV1, which was the Navy version of the Army B-34 Ventura bomber, was at that time being used to carry out daylight bombing operations, with fighter escort, on medium and fringe targets in

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[56] ibid.

[57] "Suggestions for Fighter Squadron Formations in the Solomons Area", No. 15 Squadron, 22 September 1943, RNZAF Archives Wigram 27/23/3.

Germany where they had had reasonable success. Isitt felt that under combat conditions in the South Pacific they could be used with some success in a more aggressive role than their future appeared to offer at that time. "Our crews who have returned from a tour of operations in the islands have all expressed the desire for opportunity to take part in aggressive operations," he told Wallingford, and "such a role would greatly boost the morale of our Bomber-Reconnaissance Squadrons." After the recent successes of the New Zealand fighter squadrons, there had been a tremendous change of attitude amongst the home-based squadrons, a changed outlook on the Kittyhawk, and even applications from instructors and other personnel to be posted to fighter squadrons.[59]

As far as the bomber-reconnaissance squadrons were concerned, Wallingford stressed that emphasis should continue to be placed on their reconnaissance training rather than bombing. It was the high standard of their navigation and ship recognition, and the speed and accuracy of their reports that had built a fine reputation for the New Zealand Hudson squadrons. While the greater speed of the Venturas meant that they could possibly be employed on missions considered too dangerous for the Hudson, their primary role would remain that of sea-patrols and searches. Wallingford was aware, of course, that "our own lads would prefer to have a crack at the Japs by way of relief from some of the rather monotonous patrols to which they have been committed" and earlier in the year his command had made a point of allowing each crew to undertake one bombing mission against lightly-defended targets during their operational tour. However, Hudsons were in short supply in March while preparations were taking place for new offensive operations, that Wallingford had taken them off the bombing missions. As an example of how important information from these squadrons was and the confidence American commanders had in the RNZAF, a recent report from a Hudson had caused great concern throughout the Pacific Command right up to Admiral Nimitz. During the opening phase of the operations at Munda in New Georgia in the central Solomons, an RNZAF Hudson reported two unescorted aircraft carriers in the Shortlands area close-by. In fact they had been two destroyers (code: DD) which in poor visibility were

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[58] McIntosh to Berendsen, 16 June 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, Ber 1/43/021. See Taylor, Volume I, pp. 657-661.

mistaken for cruisers (code: CA), but the decoded report arrived at South Pacific Headquarters as two carriers (code: CV) causing surprise and a great disturbance until the discrepancy was discovered.[60]

Isitt agreed that reconnaissance and navigational training should continue to have emphasis. The only reason he had suggested a more offensive role was for maintenance of morale as the odd strike or bomb raid had "an amazing effect" on the outlook of the crews. "I recollect", he told Wallingford, "the change of tone in our 487 Squadron, which had been employed for weeks on anti-submarine patrols and standby for shipping strikes, when they were permitted to carry out a raid on suitable Norwegian targets, and it is that odd job which I had in mind." Apart from that, Isitt was pleased to be continuing to receive good reports about the RNZAF squadrons in the Guadalcanal area.[61]

When Wallingford commented on the number of visitors he was receiving, especially "another load of staff officers from Air Department", Isitt regretted that there had been so many "tourists" recently but, he said, "there are certain people who must come up and others whom I cannot stop." One visitor to the area from the first category was Air Commodore Ronald Bannerman, the Air Member for Personnel, who was there to discuss RNZAF recruiting with Puttick and Barrowclough. When the prospects for recruiting aircrew in New Zealand appeared insufficient, the War Cabinet had agreed that the RNZAF could recruit from army units in New Zealand and 3 Division in New Caledonia. Unfortunately, Barrowclough had been staggered by the enthusiastic response received by the RNZAF and was now, perhaps understandably, "proving very hostile".[62]

In discussions with Colonel Salmon on 4 July, Halsey enquired (on behalf of Fitch) about the immediate and temporary availability of trained New Zealand fighter pilots for use within American squadrons in the Pacific. No aircraft or equipment would be required as these pilots would directly reinforce United States squadrons and, given the urgency of the situation, Halsey felt a reduction in New Zealand's

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[59] Isitt to Wallingford, 26 June 1943, NANZ Air 100/4.
[60] Wallingford to Isitt, 30 July 1943, NANZ Air 100/4; Wallingford does not say who was at fault.
[61] Isitt to Wallingford, 3 August 1943, NANZ Air 100/4.
[62] Wallingford to Isitt, 30 July 1943, and Isitt to Wallingford, 3 August 1943, NANZ Air 100/4. See also Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 288-289. According to Ross 5,331 men transferred from the army to the air force between April and September 1943.

defences was justified. Goddard much preferred to keep New Zealand squadrons intact, but replied that on the grounds of urgency and that Fitch considered it desirable to "infilter RNZAF personnel in United States squadrons", New Zealand would allow the "temporary loan and immediate use" of New Zealand pilots. About 21 pilots could be made available from 16 Squadron on Espiritu Santo plus another 18 from squadrons recently returned or in training in New Zealand. These pilots could be distributed and remain with American units as long as they were required. Goddard was concerned, however, that this would mean a dispersal of RNZAF pilots and somewhat contravene the policy that fighter squadrons in New Zealand on operational training constituted a part of the relief organisation for the New Zealand forward squadrons. In effect, the proposal would have eliminated the reinforcement reserves of two New Zealand squadrons and Goddard said he would appreciate having Fitch's confirmation that dispersed New Zealand pilots would still be available for reinforcing RNZAF squadrons. Eventually, the scheme was abandoned when the South Pacific Air Commander indicated that New Zealand pilots were not qualified for the appropriate types of navy fighter aircraft anyway. [63]

William Perry, president of the New Zealand Returned Servicemens Association and Coates' replacement in the War Cabinet, met with Halsey at the end of the month to explain New Zealand's position. Because of New Zealand's air force and other manpower commitments, further reinforcements could not be made to 3 Division "without altering such commitments". Halsey expressed his disappointment at New Zealand's decision to reduce 3 Division and though it was not stated directly, Perry sensed the general feeling that the 6,600 men who had been sent to the Middle East as reinforcements might instead have been diverted to the Division in New Caledonia. Halsey said he welcomed New Zealand's readiness to help with fighter pilots in the forward area and added that a high proportion of the country's air effort should be in fighters. Halsey recognised that this would depend on the release of aircraft which must be considered by the Chiefs of Staff in Washington, and might also involve careful planning and perhaps a modification and extension of the training

[63] Salmon to Halsey, 6 July 1943, Halsey Collection, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Box 3; Air Commodore Hewlett to Goddard, 5 July 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/8/7.

facilities in New Zealand. However, he would have detailed proposals formatted and communicated directly to the New Zealand government.[64]

Group Captain Reginald Stevens, an RAF officer attached for senior Air Staff duties in Wellington, now warned Goddard of the dangers of the RNZAF accepting too many different types of aircraft. The 1943-1944 allotments of aircraft from the United States had been made following representations from the Air Staff, supported by Admiral McCain, for a more or less balanced air force, designed for offensive employment in the forward area. The Joint Chiefs of Staff approved approximately 500 aircraft for New Zealand during 1943, comprising five main types of aircraft (Ventura, Dauntless, Avenger, Kittyhawk and Catalina). These were intended to equip seven types of squadrons. In May, the New Zealand Air Staff had been asked to consider what aircraft would be required during 1944 and the New Zealand Air Mission in Washington was instructed to ask for two squadrons of heavy bombers in place of two Ventura squadrons, for three squadrons of the latest Chance Vought F4U Corsair fighters in lieu of the obsolescent Kittyhawks, and for the gradual replacement of the remaining operational aircraft with more modern aircraft of similar type. The number of different types of squadrons would thus be increased to eight (heavy bomber, bomber-reconnaissance, dive bomber, torpedo bomber, fighter, army co-operation, flying-boat and transport) equipped with about 15 different types of aircraft.[65]

Isitt had already received a lengthy report from Squadron Leader Cedric Heath on policy and difficulties being experienced at the Equipment Liaison Office, part of the New Zealand Joint Staff Mission in Washington. "It would appear", said Heath, "that members of the staff at Air Headquarters are still labouring under the misapprehension that this country is a large departmental store with shelves upon shelves stocked with any item of equipment which they may need and that supplies should be able to be despatched within a few hours." Heath's office was hard-pressed to keep Wellington advised of the changing supply position, as well as maintaining liaison with the various services and departments in the United States, and processing

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[64] Meeting with Halsey, Carney and staff, 29 July 1943, NANZ EA1 59/2/219. Also Salmon to Halsey, 20 August 1943, *Documents,* Vol. III, p. 403.

[65] Group Captain R. W. K. Stevens, "RNZAF Development Policy", 13 July 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 2; COMSOPAC to Air Department Wellington, 28 July 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

a great volume of changing technical information. Heath was also finding that Air Headquarter's habit of sending enquiries was unsatisfactory as the majority of supplying firms were so busy that they did not care to answer queries, whereas they were pleased to give details against firm orders. As a result, he hoped Isitt would stress to staff in Wellington that while the supply situation was steadily improving on most types of equipment, the situation with spares was "by no means happy" and there were often delays in production before equipment became available. Luckily for New Zealand, the supply position in the United States was far more satisfactory for navy aircraft types, compared to those controlled by the army air forces.[66]

As the squadrons were re-equipped with new types, the obsolete aircraft were relegated to operational training and similar duties, but still had to be maintained and repaired. Stevens admitted that this was inevitable during a time of war when new types of aircraft made older ones obsolete very quickly, and the problem was even further complicated by the fact that most aircraft went through a number of different marks during their lifetime, often requiring quite different spares. "In a large air force", he argued, "this is not a serious drawback; but, in a small force of only 20 operational units, a wide range of types with the inevitable wide range of airframe and engine spares, operational equipment, etc., ... is likely to tax the manpower resources and the storage facilities of New Zealand to the utmost." There was no doubt that if the RNZAF was to be employed on offensive operations in the South Pacific, operational requirements had to keep pace with aircraft development and the Air Staff must press for reequipment with modern types as they became available. Yet, Stevens continued, "the RNZAF has not, nor will it ever have, the ancillary resources to operate a force of 20 squadrons composed of eight types of squadrons, plus a large training organisation. It could, however, operate a force of similar size composed of only three types of operational units."[67]

Stevens felt that New Zealand airmen had a well-deserved reputation as reconnaissance pilots and, more recently, as fighter pilots, and considered that RNZAF operational activities should be confined to these spheres. He suggested that a force of bomber-reconnaissance, flying-boat, and fighter squadrons, in the

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[66] Squadron Leader E. C. O. Heath to Isitt, 6 January 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.
[67] Stevens, "RNZAF Development Policy", 13 July 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 2.

proportion of 10:2:7, plus a transport squadron would probably be of more value to the United States commanders, provided they were equipped with suitable modern aircraft, than a mixed force such as was likely to be available in 1944. Unfortunately, both he and Goddard realised that it was probably too late to revise RNZAF requirements for the next year, but Goddard agreed that the matter should be discussed with Fitch.[68]

There was not enough time for the simplification proposals to be presented to the Joint Chiefs of Staff before their July meeting in which they approved 327 aircraft for New Zealand for 1944. This would be made up of fighters, medium-bombers, dive and torpedo bombers and flying boats and included 119 Corsairs. Group Captain John Seabrook at the New Zealand Air Mission in Washington noted that the RNZAF was "the only other air force, outside of the United States Navy, to be allotted this type of fighter which is regarded as the most successful fighter produced in the United States". An agreement was also reached, however, that allocations of aircraft to the RNZAF for 1944 should be reviewed in November 1943.[69]

Back in New Zealand, Goddard had several times been promised a discussion in the War Cabinet on a Chiefs of Staff paper he had authored concerning the Joint Staff Mission in Washington. On 19 July, Isitt was promoted Air Vice-Marshal and became Chief of Air Staff. During his last week in office, before he was posted to South-East Asia Air Command as Air Officer Administration, Goddard waited while a final attempt was made to have his paper discussed by the Cabinet. Unfortunately, the matter was again postponed, leaving Nash and Goddard involved in an argument on the issue. The Prime Minister was forced to step in on several occasions to prevent the argument from becoming too heated, as it already had on previous occasions. According to McIntosh, Nash was taking the line that every activity and every officer in Washington must be responsible to him and that he must see all the messages. Nash wanted to combine in his own person in relation to the New Zealand Government the functions of Sir John Dill and the British Ambassador in Washington,

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[68] ibid.

[69] As well as the United States Navy and Marine Corps, Corsairs were allocated to the Royal Navy about this time too, NANZ Air 118/32, p. 143. See also Minutes of Combined Chiefs of Staff 103rd Meeting, 23 July 1943; Seabrook to the British Secretary, Combined Chiefs of Staff, 27 July 1943; and Combined Chiefs of Staff Paper C.C.S. 283/1, 29 July 1943, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 549, File 452.1 Section IV.

Lord Halifax, in their relation to Winston Churchill. Fraser sent the two men away to work out a directive which could be mutually satisfactory to both of them. Wellington, McIntosh and Berendsen were slowly being forced to agree, was becoming a "mad house".[70]

We would be wise to ask for nothing but the best operational types.
(Group Captain John Seabrook, June 1943)

The development and equipment of New Zealand forces and bases to meet the requirements both of the defence of New Zealand and the progress of operations in the South Pacific Area involved matters of planning, negotiation and requisition of equipment. For this purpose, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff recommended that New Zealand's military organisation in Washington should now be reviewed in order to provide the strongest possible Joint Staff representation of New Zealand. Up until this time, the mission had consisted of army, navy and air force representatives, but the Chiefs felt that this was not sufficiently strong, particularly for the air force. In view of the current major development of the RNZAF, it was "essential that there should be the strongest possible Air representation on the Joint Staff Mission". The mission, they argued, should include an Air Commodore who would be the head of the Air Staff and be the senior representative of the New Zealand Joint Staff, instead of an army officer. There should also be five other relatively senior air officers, as well as one Naval Commander and one Lieutenant Colonel to represent the other two forces. There also existed at the time, naval and air attachés at the New Zealand Legation, but it was felt that these were not admitted to the confidence of the American Joint Staff or their subordinate officers responsible for planning and operations, so their offices would be discontinued.[71]

Isitt had argued earlier that attachés were *persona non grata* with the American services, and had already discussed the matter with Nash who agreed that a reorganisation would simplify the work in Washington.[72] Goddard agreed that it had been apparent for some time that a change was necessary in the organisation and

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[70] McIntosh to Berendsen 20 July 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, Ber 1/43/031.
[71] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 171, 1 June 1943, "New Zealand Joint Staff Mission, Washington", and Schedule No. 9 of the Minutes of the 118th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee held on 4 May 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/18/1.
[72] Isitt to Goddard, 4 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/18/1.

strength of RNZAF representation in Washington. The dependence of New Zealand on the United States for the supply of all operational aircraft and equipment, and the necessity for the adoption of American tactics and, to a more limited extent of American organisation, made it essential that the RNZAF was kept aware of trends, and in close touch with the various American authorities responsible for supply.[73]

Up until this time, RNZAF representation in Washington had consisted of several separate entities including a joint staff representative, and air attaché, liaison staff attached to the New Zealand Supply Mission, and officers on special temporary employment. The disadvantages of this scattering and lack of central control were easily apparent. The RNZAF also faced problems in the number of different types of squadrons it was being equipped with, which made it essential that air officers be available for frequent visits to United States bases and experimental establishments and keep the Air Department fully informed on tactical and technical development. Goddard argued that his proposals for representation in Washington were quite modest compared with the RAAF component of the Australian organisation in Washington, especially when it was considered that allotments to New Zealand during that year were only a little less than the allotment to Australia. The Australians, he argued, also had an advantage because the command staff of the RAAF was in close association with General MacArthur, in Australia.[74]

A letter from Carl Berendsen to Peter Fraser later in the war summarised the problems of life in the American administrative maze:

> the organisation of the United States Government, in its application to matters of supply from this country, as in other cases, is extremely complicated. It is generally true to say that on any matter there is no one person among the American officials on the operative level who (a) knows the facts and (b) has the authority to deal with any subject. Indeed, there is often no one official who knows which official or officials does know the facts or is competent to handle the matter, and in very many cases the matter is dealt with by many separate officials and, indeed, as in these cases, by several separate agencies of the United States Government. This difficulty, extreme in itself, is accentuated especially at the present time by the remarkable rapidity of changes of personnel in every agency. The only way really to get a decision on the

[73] Goddard to Chiefs of Staff Committee, "RNZAF Representation in Washington", 3 May 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/18/1.
[74] ibid.

> two points at issue is to go to the highest level. This is necessarily a lengthy process as the high level, though it possesses the authority, does not know the facts.[75]

When General George C. Kenney, the Commander of Allied Air Forces in the South-West Pacific, went to Washington in mid-March, Goddard asked Seabrook to report on the reaction to his visit. Goddard believed there was a danger that Kenney and the Australian External Affairs Minister, Dr. Herbert Evatt, would seek to reduce allotments of aircraft to New Zealand in favour of Australia on the grounds that New Zealand's allotment was "disproportionate" and that the risks were greater in the South-West Pacific.[76] Although its case had not yet been considered by the Munitions Assignment Committee and the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Admiral McCain assured Seabrook that New Zealand would be getting three squadrons of Corsairs. Seabrook informed Goddard from Washington on 26 June that McCain was "full out" to help New Zealand and was watching the RNZAF's progress very closely. He would see that New Zealand got "justice ... its full and rightful share of modern equipment". Seabrook was working with the New Zealand Air Mission to press for more modern types of aircraft such as the Corsair and the new model Ventura as they became available. "With the inevitability of future operations in our area", he warned Goddard, "we would be wise to ask for nothing but the best operational types so that our squadrons will be enabled to take their place alongside of the American squadrons in the forward areas and not be relegated to back areas owing to second rate equipment."[77]

A month later, Seabrook informed Isitt that he was registering the New Zealand government's strong desire to have the present Ventura and flying-boat squadrons progressively re-equipped with new navy types, but supply was likely to be considerably short of expectations. Seabrook had been told by the United States Army Air Force that heavy bombers would not be available for the RNZAF for 1944, but was assured by American navy officials that New Zealand was being given better

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[75] Berendsen to Fraser, 31 July 1945, cited in Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 222. Berendsen expresses the same comments to McIntosh, 30 November 1944, I McGibbon (ed.) *Undiplomatic Dialogue: Letters between Carl Berendsen and Alister McIntosh 1943-1952,* Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1993, p. 91.

[76] Goddard to Seabrook, 17 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2-2.

[77] Seabrook to Goddard, 26 June 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.

allowances for attrition than even American squadrons. By now, however, Isitt was starting to attach much greater importance to his plans for simplification.[78] After further discussions with McCain, it appeared that New Zealand would have to continue with the formation of torpedo and dive bomber squadrons and then press the American Chiefs of Staff for a simplification of types when they next considered allocations in November.[79]

The New Zealand Air Staff was becoming increasingly concerned that the composition of the RNZAF's operational force was "ill balanced" and contained too many types of squadrons in relation to total strength requiring repair, maintenance and storage facilities out of proportion to its offensive power. New Zealand now hoped to reduce the number of types and eventually concentrate mainly on fighter, medium bombers and flying-boats. McCain had been informed of this unofficially and concurred, and following discussions with Fitch, Halsey also suggested that the RNZAF would have a better balanced air force and would contribute more to the war effort if fighters were increased by four squadrons. Halsey suggested this should be done by deleting two Dauntless and two Ventura squadrons, but Wellington argued that they would prefer to give up all Dauntless and Avenger squadrons. In the meantime, however, the RNZAF would do everything possible to meet Halsey's immediate fighter requirements and, unless allocations were altered by Washington, would revert to the current plan of having two squadrons forward, two in New Zealand, and one non-effective in transit, on leave or in training.[80]

Fitch now requested another New Zealand fighter squadron forward as soon as possible, and tentatively offered three squadrons of F4F Grumman Wildcat fighters to facilitate a further increase in New Zealand fighter strength. Wallingford suggested that the immediate requirement for a fighter squadron would best be satisfied by sending a further Kittyhawk squadron forward from New Zealand, leaving two at Guadalcanal, one at Espiritu Santo and two in New Zealand, of which only one would be effective. Approximate tours of duty would then be six weeks in Guadalcanal, six weeks in New Zealand (the first three weeks of which were leave) and three weeks in

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[78] Seabrook to Isitt, 17 July 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.
[79] Seabrook to Isitt, 24 September 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[80] Stevens, Air Department Wellington, to Air Officer Commanding No. 1 (Islands) Group, 1 August 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

Espiritu Santo, with one change of squadron every three weeks in each location. Success would depend on a high standard of training at Operational Training Units as squadrons would have only six weeks together before starting their tour at Guadalcanal. Fitch and Halsey were both ready to recommend a reduction in effective strength in New Zealand, and this would also free up more technical staff for the forward areas. Fitch needed to know if New Zealand would accept the tentative offer of approximately 60 Wildcat fighters now to accelerate the ultimate increase in New Zealand fighter squadrons. In the meantime, RNZAF technical staff from No. 4 Repair Depot in Espiritu Santo with experience with the Wildcats were being sent back to New Zealand.[81]

Stevens replied from Wellington that if Halsey requested and the war cabinet approved, New Zealand could send forward one complete fighter squadron and a Fighter Maintenance Unit in approximately three weeks, depending on shipping. As for the Wildcats, however, New Zealand had no pilots or ground personnel available to man any additional squadrons at this time. The RNZAF's expansion and re-equipment programme was planned to coincide with deliveries of aircraft from the United States, and the output of the technical and flying training schools, which could not be expedited. Although New Zealand had expressed the desire to concentrate on fighters and medium bombers, it was considered too late to ask for a review of the 1943 allotments. In any case, New Zealand was not prepared to accept the Wildcat fighter in lieu of the Dauntless or Avenger unless firm allocations of more modern replacement could be made in the near future. As this was unlikely, Stevens did not consider that New Zealand should accept the aircraft.[82]

Despite this, Isitt informed the American naval command on 5 August that New Zealand would agree to man and operate two squadrons of Wildcats, but shortage of manpower, especially technical personnel, would preclude the formation of additional fighter squadrons before October. New Zealand would also require assurance that the obsolescent Wildcat would be replaced by modern fighter aircraft at an early date, and that it was understood that the increase in fighter squadrons was in lieu of the Dauntless or Avenger squadrons. Manpower shortages, Isitt repeated,

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[81] No. 1 (Islands) Group to Air Department Wellington, 3 August 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[82] Stevens to AOC No. 1 (Islands) Group, 4 August 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

made it "impossible" for the RNZAF to increase operational squadrons beyond the agreed maximum of twenty.[83]

Nimitz instructed Halsey that if he had an excess of fighter aircraft in the South Pacific Area, future shipments should be regulated accordingly since these aircraft were urgently required in training establishments and for forming new units in the United States. It was, he believed, impractical to divert fighters for the formation and support of additional New Zealand squadrons above present commitments.[84] Halsey believed that the desperate need for additional fighter squadrons in the forward area was now such that the retention of three of them in New Zealand no longer appeared justified. After Isitt reminded him that there were in fact only two effective squadrons in New Zealand (as the third was recently returned and was either on leave or undergoing anti-malarial treatment), Halsey requested another one be made available for movement forward.[85]

Some confusion was also created at this time about the exact nature of relations between the South Pacific and South-West Pacific Commands, and the Australian and New Zealand Governments. After conversations with General MacArthur, New Zealand's Defence Minister, Frederick Jones, had been left with the impression that the General now had authority extending into the South Pacific. As a result, Jones had felt that increased liaison might be needed between the New Zealand government and MacArthur's command. To clarify the matter, Berendsen had a frank discussion with Australian Defence Secretary, Sir Frederick Shedden. Shedden confirmed Berendsen's impression that there had been no alteration, at least as far as the Australian government was aware, of the directives of the commanders of the two areas. By agreement with Admiral Halsey, MacArthur had been given authority to "co-ordinate" and "time" the movements of South Pacific forces, including New Zealand forces, operating in the South-West Pacific, but these forces remained under Halsey's command. These were temporary and ad hoc arrangements and applied only in MacArthur's area, although the Australian government had discussed quite frankly the matter of the use of its cruisers outside the South-West Pacific Area, especially

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[83] Isitt to Commander 3rd Fleet United States Navy, 5 August 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[84] Nimitz to Halsey, 5 August 1943, Nimitz Command Summary, Book Four, p. 1783.
[85] Halsey to Isitt, Isitt to Halsey, 5 August 1943 and Halsey to New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 7 August 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

when this had resulted in the loss of the *Canberra* and the *Hobart*. The subdivision between the two areas continued to exist in force and there was no indication that this would change.[86]

At this stage, New Zealand received all three of the regular digests and intelligence reviews issued by the South-West Pacific Command. The first was a daily digest sent through naval channels to the Navy Office and then up to the war cabinet. Secondly, a weekly document known as the "Australian Military Forces Weekly Intelligence Review" which covered the operations and intelligence reports of the week was sent to Army Headquarters, Wellington. This was the most interesting document and contained information on Japanese strength, location, and order of battle as much as could be known, as well as disposition and numbers of aircraft and naval vessels. It was too large to be read to the war cabinet as a whole, but information of particular importance was drawn to its attention. The third document, which was taken from this was the Air Intelligence Summary which was produced weekly or more and consisted of detailed information on enemy air strength and situation.[87]

Shedden explained to Berendsen that apart from these reports Australian political authorities had enormous difficulties, as did their counterparts in New Zealand, in obtaining information through service channels, Australian or American. The Australians received "practically nothing" from Washington and Shedden said he had the greatest difficulty in extracting anything at all from the service side, even though he believed them to be informed in detail from Washington. Several Australians, for example, had referred to an occasion when their government had learned of the loss of an Australian destroyer only through London. The Australian Army Secretary, F. R. Sinclair, said he was hated by the service authorities because of his endeavours to get information for his political chiefs, and that they showed "every disposition to get quite out of hand and to resent political control". Both Shedden and Sinclair felt quite strongly that matters in this respect were much better managed in Wellington. The Australian government, for example, was currently experiencing the "greatest trouble" in the conflict for the remaining recruits available between the army

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[86] Berendsen to McIntosh, 7 August 1943, NANZ EA 1 81/10/4.
[87] ibid.

and air force, and in getting men released from the army for farming and primary industry. Sinclair thought that Australia would soon have to follow New Zealand's example and reduce the number of forces allocated to national defence.[88]

In passing this information on to Alister McIntosh, Berendsen hoped it could be restricted to the Prime Minister's Department and to the war cabinet. In view of the frank and open way the Australians had discussed somewhat delicate matters with him, he felt in particular that it would be most unwise to pass it on to New Zealand's service authorities in case the information was returned to Australia and caused trouble. Berendsen was informed that the New Zealand government was aware of the ad hoc nature of the arrangement between Halsey and MacArthur. Major-General R. H. Dewing, Head of the United Kingdom Liaison staff in Australia, had discussed with the Prime Minister and the war cabinet the nature of the relationship between the two commanders and had admitted that he had been unable to obtain knowledge of the precise mechanics of the liaison existing between the two. As for the exchange of information between American commanders and the government, this remained a vexed question. However, McIntosh, felt that, like the Australian authorities, New Zealand ministers were "not disposed to be over particular on this point".[89]

Halsey now told Fraser that he was "greatly disappointed" that New Zealand could not furnish a division of three full brigades, and he accepted the decision on two brigades "with great reluctance". He hoped that losses from the reduced division in service would not be more than ten percent, but if they were he was counting on the New Zealand government to maintain these two brigades at full strength. Operations in New Georgia had progressed more slowly than he had hoped and there was still a hard fight ahead in which he would be "relying upon the New Zealand Division to bear its share of the effort."[90]

On 28 August, Isitt confirmed to Air Commodore Nevill in London that the manpower situation had imposed a limit to the expansion of the RNZAF to 20 operational squadrons. Furthermore, the RNZAF had submitted proposals to Washington for re-organisation and re-equipment during 1944 with a view to a

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[88] ibid.
[89] McIntosh to Berendsen, 4 September 1943, NANZ EA 1 81/10/4.
[90] Halsey to Fraser, 21 August 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 13.

reduction in types of squadrons. Isitt considered that the ideal composition of the RNZAF would be to have ten fighter squadrons, six or seven medium bomber or bomber reconnaissance squadrons, two flying-boat, and one transport squadron. Employment of this force, if it eventuated, would be a matter for Fitch, but Isitt had no doubt that RNZAF units would be trained for and participate in combined operations. At this stage, he had no indication of any intention to form a tactical air force in the area, and it was, therefore, most unlikely that employment could be found in this area for the majority of RNZAF personnel now serving with the RAF. Isitt's personal opinion was that lack of ground crews would preclude expansion of the RNZAF beyond 20 squadrons and, therefore, RNZAF aircrews should remain with the RAF in any theatre in which the RAF was engaged, although this had not yet been referred to the war cabinet.[91]

Jones had warned Fraser earlier in the year that New Zealand airmen in Britain were already of the opinion that they would be reduced in rank as soon as they returned to New Zealand or that they would have to serve in a subordinate capacity to Americans who had had little if any operational experience and this was "causing uneasiness among our men".[92] Goddard told Isitt that hardly any of the New Zealanders serving with the RAF in Asia wanted to return to the RNZAF because they believed that New Zealand squadrons did not do much flying. Isitt replied that it would always be a problem keeping New Zealanders in every theatre fully apprised of developments at home.[93] However, he admitted, "a number of men who have come back from England have not had the interesting jobs that they would like or the advancement which they consider themselves entitled". This was, Isitt felt, because of the success of American operations in the South Pacific. If things had gone badly, "aircraft would have been made available to us here more rapidly, more squadrons would have been formed and these boys would have found themselves in positions of great responsibility". As it was, however, some New Zealanders found themselves quite unhappy after returning to New Zealand. "They have left an immense organisation", Isitt explained, "and all the excitement of strange countries and of

[91] Isitt to Nevill RNZAF Headquarters London, 28 August 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[92] Jones to Fraser, 4 June 1943, NANZ EA1 59/2/214.
[93] Goddard to Isitt, 21 September 1943, Isitt to Goddard, 12 October 1943, NANZ Air 100/7.

active service for a much smaller sphere and a much smaller organisation which is considerably limited in its scope and equipment".[94]

By the end of August, Seabrook was pleased to hear of a changed establishment in Washington after the war cabinet recognised the importance of stronger air force representation. He was looking forward to returning home with his family and felt that his replacement, Air Commodore James Findlay, would also do very well there when he arrived. "Knowing the exasperation of Washington", he reminded Isitt, "you will appreciate and understand that during the period of rapid expansion on the operations side of the RNZAF with our inadequate staff we have been hard pressed to cope with the ever-increasing demands from New Zealand." Seabrook felt that his staff had done their best to keep New Zealand's requirements continuously before the American Chiefs of Staff and in this they had been greatly assisted by senior RAF officers in Washington and also by General Arnold and his staff. Especially important, however, was Admiral McCain, now Chief of the Navy Aeronautics Bureau, who had been a "true and staunch friend". It was due to McCain's influence that New Zealand had been successful in getting Corsairs for 1944 and gaining "better allocations than our other competitors" of Venturas and Catalina flying-boats. McCain also whole-heartedly endorsed Isitt's plans to concentrate on three main aircraft types, and intended to carry out the same process of simplification in American squadrons in the Pacific as soon as he could.[95]

In keeping with our status of a British Dominion and our responsibilities in the Pacific.

(Colonel C.W. Salmon, September 1943)

A major problem was that the operational force of the RNZAF would soon contain six types of squadrons equipped with eight types of aircraft and five main types of engine. In addition, the operational and training organisations in New Zealand were using at least seven different types of aircraft, many of which were obsolete. "The multiplicity of types contained in an Air Force of comparatively small size", Isitt reiterated to Fitch, "tends to increase beyond economic limits the overheads in the shape of repair and maintenance facilities, stores, etc., and necessitate the

[94] Isitt to Mrs. White of Wanganui, 26 April 1943, NANZ Air 100/7.
[95] Seabrook to Isitt, 25 August 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.

transportation from the United States of more squadron basic equipment than would be required for a force of similar size but of less variety of types." These difficulties and disadvantages were fully appreciated at the time of the negotiations for the expansion of the RNZAF, but it was considered that "ease of administration and economy in maintenance should take second place to offensive power". This was still the view of the Air Staff in Wellington, but it was now open to question whether dive-bombers and torpedo-bombers did in fact represent the most efficient contribution which the RNZAF could make towards the war effort in the South Pacific.[96]

Provided approval could be obtained from Washington for the gradual re-equipment of the Ventura squadrons with a medium bomber type, Isitt proposed that the eventual composition of the RNZAF's combat force would be six squadrons of medium or reconnaissance bomber, ten squadrons of fighters, two squadrons of flying-boats and a transport squadron. Isitt was aware that the main objection to this force would be the high proportion of defensive as opposed to offensive strength, as it had always been the desire of the New Zealand government "to participate to the maximum extent in offensive operations". However, he explained to Fitch, without knowledge of future strategic plans it was impossible to forecast what type of combat force was likely to be of most value in twelve months' time. If the policy was to advance from New Britain and New Guinea towards the Celebes, a force of medium bombers and fighters might prove the best contribution from New Zealand. On the other hand, if the trend was towards Truk and the north, short-range bombers and fighters might be an embarrassment. Isitt hoped at least to receive some guidance from Fitch and also Halsey as to their views so that he could place a proposal before the Joint Chiefs of Staff when they met to discuss aircraft allocations in November.[97]

Fitch replied that he fully concurred with Isitt's ideas for the reorganisation of the RNZAF, even though it was "impractical at the present time to state with assurance the ideal composition of forces after the Japanese have been driven out of the Solomons - New Britain - Bismarck Area". Fitch generally favoured an increase

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[96] "RNZAF: Future Organisation and Employment", Memorandum for Fitch from Isitt, 17 September 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[97] ibid.

in the proportion of fighters to other types. Unfortunately, any reorganisation would depend on New Zealand obtaining allocations for increased fighter squadrons.[98]

On 22 September, Colonel Salmon submitted further recommendations for maintaining and improving liaison between New Zealand and the United States and, especially, in "developing amongst United States forces ... a knowledge of the part which New Zealand is playing in the conduct of the war". Salmon had been appointed in April 1943 at the suggestion of the war cabinet, particularly Fraser and Coates, who felt that New Zealand's war effort should be more closely co-ordinated with, and New Zealand should have more intimate contact with, the United States Pacific Command. It was felt at the time that the Americans were not advising or consulting New Zealand in their plans "in keeping with our status of a British Dominion or of our responsibilities in the Pacific". Salmon believed that at the time of his appointment: "our United States Allies disregarded us in many ways, and even though this apparent disregard was unconscious, it was considered dangerous, as it might affect Peace Table matters and New Zealand's after-war planning". New Zealand wanted to have closer contact with Halsey and his senior officers, but it was considered that these officers would object to ministers or civilians or to anything savouring of the political or diplomatic. It was decided by the war cabinet that New Zealand's representative should have a broad appointment to cover not only the three services, but all of New Zealand's Pacific war effort. Salmon now saw his duties as including gaining American goodwill for New Zealand's war effort, gaining information on Halsey's plans so that New Zealand could formulate its own plans, keeping his Chiefs of Staff advised of operational plans, and reorganisation of commands, and acting as representative for each of the service chiefs and his government.[99]

In his report, Salmon argued that he had found a "considerable lack of co-ordination" by the United States Services concerning what they required from New Zealand, and he hoped that this could be improved by developing personal contacts at the South Pacific Command. He had been greatly assisted in this by Halsey's deputy,

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[98] Fitch to Isitt, 24 September 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

[99] Salmon, "Memorandum on New Zealand's War Relations and Co-ordination in the Pacific", 22 September 1943, Attached to New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 183, 18 October 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/8/7, pp. 6-8.

Admiral Wilkinson, who had only recently departed the command. Unfortunately, it now seemed unlikely that the Americans would appoint a senior officer with knowledge of plans to co-ordinate requirements from New Zealand. Interestingly, compared to what Berendsen had to say about getting things done in the United States, Salmon noted that the Americans were inclined to criticise New Zealand for the same thing. Typical criticisms, he reported, were that New Zealand departments did not know what the others were doing and that there was a lack of accepting responsibility by departments. United States officers had difficulty in ascertaining who was the right person to go to and there was a common impression, to New Zealand's detriment, that when they were told "I must refer this to the Minister" this meant a long delay or a dodging of the issue.[100]

Many Americans, of course, remembered the friendly treatment they had received while in New Zealand. Captain Glyn Jones, for example, was chaplain with the First Marine Division on leave from Guadalcanal. There was certainly plenty of fun, scenery, fishing and even good food, but there was something else as well. Jones remembered later that the people were "simply magnificent ... unpretentious, warm ... a free people in the best sense of the word". His division had also left with the feeling that because New Zealand had suffered so many casualties throughout the war, and because the Pacific had been practically defenceless before they arrived, the New Zealanders looked upon them as "saviours". The New Zealanders, Jones believed:

> felt when we left, in some ways, as perhaps they felt when their own youngsters left. They knew that a lot of our kids would never come back and the ones they had come to know they were afraid about. This communicated itself to our kids, that someone should care that much.... New Zealand, I think, did for us everything that we needed to have done for us, including giving us affection and concern right at the point when it wouldn't be unusual for one to think who the hell cares what's happening to me. We'd been out on those islands, getting Asiatic and so on, and nobody cared and all at once somebody cared.[101]

A later report for the State Department suggested that perhaps New Zealand was becoming overwhelmed by a "tidal wave" of Americans. According to the report,

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[100] ibid., p. 10.

[101] Captain Glyn Jones, United States Navy (Ret.), Interviewed 13 October 1975 by John T. Mason for United States Naval Institute, Annapolis Md., Oral History Collection, Copy at Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center, pp. 57-59.

many New Zealanders claimed that the first Marines were superior to those who followed later. Sidney Greenbie, of the United States Office of War Information, felt that this largely reflected the feelings of the New Zealanders themselves who, he believed, generally expressed no emotions. "I feel", he wrote, "that the people of New Zealand really showed their true thoughts at the first arrival of the American forces and then snapped back to their usual chilly reserve and became somewhat ashamed for their show of emotion."[102] Vice-Admiral John Barr Colwell, who served with New Zealanders in the islands, only remembered how marvellous New Zealand beef was when they could get it and what a tough group the New Zealanders were: "when they went out on the town, stand back!"[103]

Another American report on relations with New Zealand servicemen in Tonga characterised them as ranging from "amused tolerance" to "cool mutual respect". The writer served with several New Zealand air units in the South Pacific Area and believed that, like the Australians on Bougainville, the New Zealanders were "a rough and ready lot whose equipment, clothing, living quarters, food, and dental care [were] usually far below American standards". Yet after seeing the New Zealanders in action, the Americans could not ignore the "excellent quality of such men". The situation was further complicated by the fact that New Zealand servicemen were generally paid much less than the Americans who were "too wealthy, displayed too much money, [and] were always able to get anything they wanted". This made the Americans more popular with the Tongans, but often upset the New Zealanders. It was reported, for example, that working at moderate speed with local labour, New Zealand forces had nearly completed the Tongan airfield at a cost of $56,000 when the Americans took it over and spent $498,000 to make additions.[104]

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[102] Sidney Greenbie, "Relations between American Troops Abroad and the Nationals of Free Foreign Countries", United States State Department, 27 April 1945, Administration History Appendices Number 34(16)(f), Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center. On questions of local inflation, labour shortage and marriages see "Impact of American Forces on the Auckland Area" by John C. Fuess American Vice-Consul, 28 August 1944, NARA R.G. 59, Box 5115, File 847H.00/8-2844.

[103] Vice-Admiral John Barr Colwell, United States Navy (Ret.), Interviewed 22 May 1973 by John T. Mason for United States Naval Institute, Annapolis Md., Oral History Collection, Operational Archives, United States Navy Historical Center, pp. 85-86.

[104] "Tongatapu Advanced Base Command History", Lieutenant Commander John Burke (Staff Historical Officer USNR), Operational Archives, United States Navy History Center, pp. 130-136, and Appendix A. For a brief Pacific Island viewpoint see I. C. Campbell, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, Christchurch, University of Canterbury Press, 1989, pp. 183-186.

Generally speaking, relations between New Zealand and American officials were friendly and cooperative. Salmon reported that Americans showed a willingness, even eagerness, to be friendly, but were sometimes put off by New Zealanders being aloof or reserved. While there was a very friendly attitude and extremely generous co-operation on the part of senior American officers with actual experience of contact with New Zealanders, Salmon was disturbed to find among the majority of Americans a "complete unawareness of Great Britain and New Zealand", and the parts each was playing. This he believed was due to the almost complete lack of information being provided from British sources to American media such as war correspondents whose relationship with New Zealand was "extremely unsatisfactory - almost bordering on dislike" largely due to delays in censoring. Most importantly, however, were the films being shown nightly throughout the American services, none of which emphasised the role being played by the non-American allies such as New Zealand. Moreover, while Salmon reported very good relations between New Zealanders and British, French and Australian officials in the Pacific, he had found much the same ignorance of New Zealand's war effort amongst even some Australians. This, he argued, allowed the build-up of misconceptions, and would ultimately disadvantage New Zealand in the post-war settlement.[105]

Some commonly held American misconceptions that Salmon identified at the time were that New Zealand was a 40 hour week country which was not really working towards the war effort; that it hoped to gain from American activities after the war; that New Zealand was a vassal of Great Britain which had neglected the country and left America to protect it. Perhaps more importantly, were the two common ideas that either New Zealand's war effort consisted solely of two brigades and a small air force in the Pacific accompanied by a complete ignorance of New Zealand's contribution in the Middle East and Europe or, alternatively, that the country was putting all its energy into these areas and leaving America to fight its battles in the Pacific. In fairness, Salmon was quick to add that New Zealand servicemen and officers were far from being above criticism, as their own characteristics, prejudices and misconceptions of the Americans were not conducive in many cases to a happy atmosphere of co-operation. As a result, any consideration

[105] Salmon, "Memorandum on New Zealand's War Relations", pp. 11-16.

given to correcting United States misconceptions of New Zealand should also include a correcting of New Zealanders' misconceptions of the United States Services, of the war effort of the United States, and of the help given to New Zealand by the United States.[106]

While the Chiefs of Staff agreed with some aspects of Salmon's report, they did not agree with him that it was necessary to establish liaison at the Central Pacific Command in Honolulu, nor at the South-West Pacific Headquarters with General MacArthur. At this stage, they were satisfied that close liaison between them and the United Kingdom Military and Air Mission in Australia under General Dewing was keeping them sufficiently informed of developments in the South-West Pacific. Salmon's concern that the South Pacific Command appeared to be the only Allied headquarters where there was not a combination of American and British officers participating in directional command drew the comment that in fact the Commander of No. 1 (Islands) Group attended all operational conferences with Admiral Fitch and could raise any point on the employment of the RNZAF. Salmon had also suggested that New Zealand's Pacific "umbrella" should include New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia whereas the Chiefs were quick to point out that they considered New Zealand's sphere of influence to extend only so far as the line from New Caledonia in the West, through Fiji, Tonga, Samoa to the Cook Islands in the East.[107]

On 25 September, Isitt informed Admiral Halsey's Chief of Staff, Admiral R. B. 'Mick' Carney, that he was hoping to visit Washington in November so that he could be there during discussions on future allocations of aircraft to the RNZAF and, incidentally, to represent his views on the employment of the RNZAF subsequent to the campaign in the Solomons. Isitt hoped to call on Admiral Nimitz on the way as he had not done so since taking over command of the RNZAF, and wanted any advice Carney or Halsey might have for him on his proposal.[108] At the same time, Stevens cabled the New Zealand Air Mission in Washington to inform them of Isitt's proposed visit and remind them that simplification proposals for the RNZAF must take second

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[106] ibid.

[107] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 183, "New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Representative at South Pacific Force Headquarters - review of Report", 18 October 1943, (and Salmon Report p. 20) NANZ Air 1 130/8/7.

place to operational requirements. If it was the opinion of United States Commanders that the RNZAF would contribute more to the war effort in the South Pacific Area by retaining the current approved combat organisation, then New Zealand was prepared to drop the simplification proposals.[109]

"When are the Yanks going to boost the RNZAF?" Goddard asked Isitt from India. The main problem at the moment, Isitt admitted, was actually "the dwindling source of aircrew". He was hopeful that "with a forceful publicity campaign and another raid on the Army" he would be able to get enough to carry the RNZAF through for the first three or four months of 1944, but after that was unsure.[110] Without even a broad knowledge of future plans for operations in the South Pacific, New Zealand could not make definite recommendations. Fitch was asked to forward his comments on to Halsey as soon as possible so that the New Zealand air mission could be briefed on correct lines for preliminary conversations prior to the Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting in November. Stevens had also received information from the New Zealand Air Mission of the introduction of a modified Liberator in replacement of the Ventura. However, he said, this would necessitate heavy increases in personnel establishments which New Zealand could ill afford. New Zealand would prefer the replacement to be a twin-engined Ventura type bomber possibly with increased range and performance, but again this was a matter for Fitch's recommendation.[111]

In early October, Halsey requested another New Zealand fighter squadron for the forward area and suggested that the fighter defence of New Zealand could now be reduced temporarily to one squadron. Isitt agreed that a squadron was available and could be despatched in about three weeks providing the government and the other Chiefs of Staff approved. The programme for the expansion and development of the RNZAF had made provision for the formation of five fighter squadrons, three of which were to be available for employment in the forward area and the other two being reserved for the defence of New Zealand. Up until this time, however, only four squadrons had been able to be formed, two of which had already been sent forward, and the fifth would not even be formed until later in the month. The Chiefs of Staff

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[108] Isitt to Carney, 25 September 1943, NANZ Air 100/9.
[109] Stevens to New Zealand Air Mission Washington, 25 September 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.
[110] Goddard to Isitt, 21 September 1943, Isitt to Goddard, 12 October 1943, NANZ Air 100/7.
[111] Stevens to New Zealand Air Mission Washington, 25 September 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/19/3.

considered that in view of the small danger of air attack against New Zealand, at least without adequate warning, this temporary reduction in New Zealand strength could be accepted.[112] A month later, American authorities made another "strong request", this time for an additional general-reconnaissance squadron to provide constant anti-submarine cover over the sea area between Espiritu Santo and Guadalcanal. This would also reduce the number of these squadrons in New Zealand to one, but once again the Chiefs of Staff recommended that in view of the importance of the duties required and the present reduced risk to New Zealand this would be acceptable. If there should be a threat to New Zealand, they argued, aircraft of the operational training organisation could be employed for defence or, if necessary, air forces could be recalled from the islands and be available for duty within a maximum period of seventy-two hours.[113]

At least proportionately, war with Japan is our war.

(Walter Nash, March 1943)

In accordance with war cabinet decisions on the expansion of the RNZAF, aircraft were allotted to New Zealand by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. Details of the specific number of aircraft to be delivered up to March 1944 had been finalised and on 15 October 1943, the Air Department asked the government for authority to spend £20 million, or about $1.2 billion in today's terms, on aircraft and equipment. The prices given were estimates only because although every endeavour had been made to obtain the correct prices for this lend-lease equipment, the results had been "most unsatisfactory and unreliable". Exact prices could always be ascertained for British aircraft and equipment, but not for American.[114]

The New Zealand Treasury was concerned about the upcoming expenditure on the RNZAF. Treasury had budgeted that about £20 million from the War Expenses Account would be used for aircraft, mainly for the squadrons in the Pacific. The Air Department estimated that the figure could be anywhere between £25-50 million for the next financial year, depending on the types of aircraft the United States supplied to

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[112] Schedule No. 1 of the 124th Meeting of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Committee held on 9 October 1943, NANZ Air 1 105/3/3 vol. 4.

[113] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 185, "Temporary Retention of an Additional Bomber-Reconnaissance Squadron in the Forward Area", 30 November 1943, NANZ Air 1 105/3/3 vol. 4.

[114] Air Department to New Zealand Supply Council, 15 October 1943, NANZ Air 1 113/3/2.

them and at what cost. President Roosevelt had already indicated in the press that the United States did not want the new war debts to jeopardise the peace, but nations receiving lend-lease would be expected to repay the United States as far as they could although not necessarily in dollars. While this comment seems to have been largely intended for a domestic audience, from this and other indications received, it appeared to treasury officials that "the nearer we get to victory and the end of the war, the more definite will become United States demands for settlement in some form for any balance of Lease-Lend over Reciprocal Aid." So far, New Zealand was receiving about the same in lend-lease as it was giving without counting the purchase of these aircraft. According to treasury officials, however, New Zealand had no hope of increasing reverse lend-lease to £40 or £50 millions per year and nor should it be expected of the Dominion. Under these circumstances, treasury felt that it was increasingly important to impress upon the appropriate authorities in Washington "the inequity of charging New Zealand under lend-lease with the cost of planes supplied to our squadrons operating under Admiral Halsey's command in the South Pacific Area".[115]

Wellington had no say in the amount charged, and the Treasury Secretary argued that "if we relieve the United States of the necessity for supplying crews for operating and maintaining the planes used in the offensive operations, that is not a valid reason for charging us with the cost of the machines which the United States would have supplied in any case." When added to the expenditure on New Zealand's other air activities, as well as the navy, and the army in the Middle East and the Pacific, the cost was becoming too high, especially when it was noted that in the case of trained airmen supplied to the RAF, New Zealand paid for neither the planes nor the personnel.[116]

Fraser had previously cabled Nash that aircraft supplied for the direct defence of New Zealand were acceptable as a proper lend-lease charge but asked him to question the appropriate American authorities whether or not this should be the case for aircraft supplied for operations in the South Pacific Area. If this were to be the case, it would appear as if New Zealand was receiving huge amounts of aid when this

[115] Secretary to the Treasury to Minister of Finance, 14 October 1943, NANZ Air 1 113/3/2; and Air 118/81f, p. 200.

was not really so, and the amount would be more than New Zealand could ever supply to American forces in exchange. Once again, the Prime Minister brought up the fact that when New Zealand pilots were sent to serve with the RAF, the United Kingdom kept the New Zealand squadrons in aircraft and also paid the personnel. Something similar should, he imagined, therefore be possible for the New Zealanders sent to serve in the Pacific with the Americans. "Being closer to the scene of operations strategically", he argued, "we should supply what we can from our resources to assist American offensive operations and we are doing so in both men and material but we contend that we should not be charged with the cost of material supplied from the United States for such offensive operations even if such material is used by our men." One possible solution would be for New Zealand to accept the charge for aircraft sent to New Zealand, and then charge the United States for aircraft sent out from New Zealand. Alternatively, aircraft for offensive use could be charged directly to the American army or navy votes.[117]

Fig 4.1[118]

Type of Aircraft	**Number**	**Estimated cost per aircraft (N.Z. £)**	**Total Cost (N.Z. £)**
PBY5 Catalina	25	30,824	770,600
PV1 & B34 Ventura	105	32,767	3,440,574
TBF Avenger	63	41,612	2,621,556
SBD Dauntless	120	23,350	2,802,000
P-40 Kittyhawk	152	21,062	3,201,424
C-47 Douglas Transport	6	43,153	258,918
C-60 Lodestar	9	40,842	367,578
	480		
Plus spares and squadron equipment			6,731,325
Plus freight on 373 aircraft at £2,000 each (25 PBY and 82 PV1 aircraft to be flown to destination)			746,000
			£ 20,939,975

Nash promised to discuss the matter with the appropriate authorities, although he seemed less than convinced of these arguments which have later been described as "ridiculous". "Would it not keep Lease-Lend in more correct perspective", he asked,

[116] ibid.
[117] Fraser to Nash, 16 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 113/3/2.
[118] Air Department to New Zealand Supply Council, 15 October 1943, NANZ Air 1 113/3/2.

"if we accepted charge ... on [the] basis that at least proportionately war with Japan is our war?" The same question was also being raised about American tanks being supplied to Australia for use in New Guinea. Nash pointed out that New Zealand's operational squadrons in the Pacific were like its expeditionary force in the Middle East for which the country bore the full cost. Nash then further confused the issue by arguing that it might be better to make a case for the supply of commodities of all kinds to be debited as commodities without any record in money terms. He had already discussed the problem with Admiral King, who had told him it was a matter for Edward Stettinius who was heading the lend-lease programme. The matter was not immediately resolved, but after the war the United States generously cancelled its entire credit balance of aid with New Zealand.[119]

The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff only comment was that in devising any system of regional security in the post-war period, it would be necessary to ensure that the United States were given considerable interests, not only north of the Equator, but as well in the central and southern Pacific. The Chiefs were unsure what form American interest in the Pacific would take, although they suggested that the possession of territories which had a considerable economic value would create the greatest interest. Once again, particular regard should be given to British interests in the South Pacific, especially that there be adequate facilities for defence and "assured rights" for the operation of British civil air services across the Pacific. This time, however, New Zealand still had to contemplate ("though this is a contingency against which we would wish to legislate by our actions in the post-war period as far as possible") that the United States might remain neutral in some future war involving the Pacific in which the British Empire would be engaged. New Zealand concurred with Churchill who felt that it was undesirable to grant leased base facilities in any British territories, but rather to adopt the principle that defence facilities in any British territories should be equally available to the forces of friendly powers, such as had been the case with Gibraltar before the war.[120]

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[119] Nash to Fraser, 16 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 113/3/2, see also Air 118/81f, pp. 199-202.
[120] Schedule No. 8 of Minutes of the 130th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee held on 19 November 1943, NANZ EA 1 81/4/2a-3.

Meanwhile, New Zealand prepared to place its case for a reduction in aircraft types before the American Chiefs of Staff in November. The RNZAF's official request for 1944 was to have:

10 Fighter Squadrons
6 Bomber-Reconnaissance Squadrons
2½ Flying Boat Squadrons
1 Medium Transport Squadron

giving a total of 19½ operational squadrons. In the meantime, it seemed that there was no other choice but to continue with the formation of the dive-bomber and torpedo-bomber squadrons already allocated by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. McCain and his staff had already indicated that the five extra Corsair squadrons requested would be granted but due to heavy demand for fighter aircraft in all theatres, it could take until early 1945 until they all arrived. At least this would give the air force a gradual change-over period to organise training and supply arrangements, but the Kittyhawk squadrons would also have to be kept until the end of 1944. Owing to a serious production lag, New Zealand would not be receiving its full 1943 allocation of Venturas and it was unlikely that any further would be allocated for the next year. As a replacement, the Liberator, which had been reporting excellent results on long distance searches over the Atlantic, was again suggested.[121]

Findlay reported that it was apparent that the production of both fighters and Venturas had not been up to expectations. New Zealand would be receiving its five extra Corsair squadrons, but there would not be an extra bomber-reconnaissance squadron. Findlay and Isitt agreed that the modified Liberator was "hardly suitable" for the RNZAF, so this left the choice of either reducing the number of RNZAF squadrons in the Pacific, or scrapping the simplification programme and carrying on with the original one with the Avengers and Dauntlesses. Findlay's opinion was that they should be content with the extra fighter squadrons and leave in a bid for the extra bomber-reconnaissance squadron as soon as it became available. This would probably not be until towards the end of 1944, as demand for this type of aircraft was far in excess of supply.[122]

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[121] Seabrook to Isitt, 9 November 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.
[122] Findlay to Isitt, 10 November 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.

On a personal note, Findlay reported that he was settling in to Washington, but had not yet achieved the necessary level of insanity to cope fully with "this crazy place" although he felt that by the end of the week he should know whether he would have to be "put quietly away or be able to jump into the stream and be carried along with it". Seabrook had been most helpful and Findlay was starting to appreciate the tremendous amount of work he had put in and the large number of contacts he had made. He had also had to borrow Seabrook's car as the main difficulty he had found was the inordinate time it took to get anything done, due chiefly to the fact that all the people he had to see were spread over different parts of the city. Findlay was also finding that Admiral McCain was "definitely on our side" and held preliminary discussions with McCain and Brigadier General G. C. Jamieson of the American War Department regarding aircraft allocations and found them both to be "very sympathetic, frank and helpful". His other major worry was money as it had taken him twelve days to find a house, during which time he had stayed at a local hotel which he complained had nearly driven him to bankruptcy. He had managed to buy some basic furnishings from the previous occupant for $350, but would need some sort of car to do his job properly and these were almost unobtainable, or at least he could get nothing under about $800.[123]

The year ended with New Zealand still unsure as to what to do with the Pacific Division. "It looks to me", McIntosh wrote to Berendsen, "as if there is no alternative but to withdraw the men from the Pacific." McIntosh had an idea that the Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand, Thomas D'Alton, would have as one of his main objectives the conversion of New Zealand to the idea that its European troops should come back for service in the Pacific. Berendsen thought that General Freyberg's division should be brought back at once and used in the Pacific. "We simply must take part in the Pacific War", he told McIntosh, "if our Allies are to be expected to allow us any say in post-war events in that area. I know how difficult it is, but I am sure it is the right thing to do". While he confessed that he was inclined to agree, McIntosh did not see how it would be possible to arrange at the present time.

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[123] ibid. According to a pay schedule for 1944 also in Air 100/5, Findlay, Air Representative and Head of the New Zealand Joint Staff Mission was then on a salary of U.S. $8,000 less superannuation, Colonel N.W.P Pharazyn and Commander B.T. Giles the Army and Navy representatives to the

"In any case", he told Berendsen, "our two Brigades are only doing garrison duty now and as far as one can guess that is all they will ever do as long as they remain in the South Pacific Area." McIntosh estimated that there were probably about 500,000 men now in the South and South-West Pacific Areas in which case 17,000 New Zealanders would not make much difference except as a token force. Moreover, the maintenance of this many men relied heavily on food provided from New Zealand and Australia. New Zealand's priorities had to be, therefore, the "twenty squadron Air Force first, maintenance of the small naval force of minesweepers second, production third and Army finished".[124]

Mission earned $7,000, other air officers such as the Senior Equipment Officer, Squadron Leader E.C.O. Heath earned $4,500, and the secretary Miss E. C. Honeyford earned $2,400.

[124] McIntosh to Berendsen, 12 December 1943, and Berendsen to McIntosh, 20 December 1943, McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue,* pp. 49-50, 52.

Sunset in the tropics. A member of 2 Fighter Maintenance Unit working on the wing of a Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk, Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, 1943.

"I have seen their very splendid fighting qualities and I would say that anyone who does not use New Zealanders when and where he can is a damned fool." Admiral William F. Halsey bids farewell to Air Vice-Marshal Isitt, 1944.

The heart of RNZAF operations in the Pacific. A New Zealand Servicing Unit area in Bougainville, 1944.

Already on his second air force career, this time with the RNZAF. Air Commodore Sir Robert Clark-Hall attending a function, 1944.

Assistant Chief of Air Staff and then post-war Chief of Air Staff, Air Commodore Arthur Nevill tackles the paperwork, 1944.

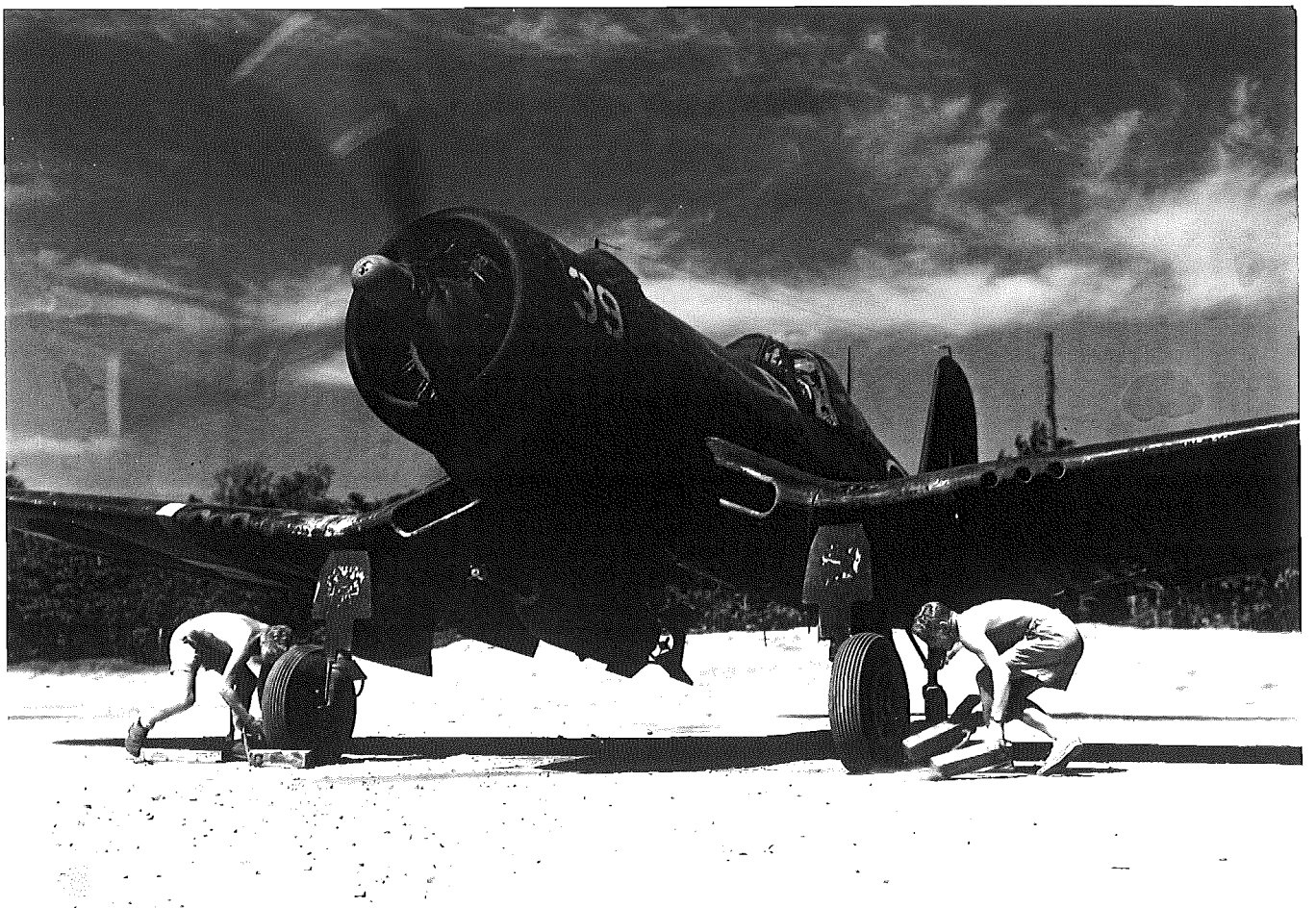
A 25 Squadron SBD-5 Douglas Dauntless dive-bomber over Bougainville, 1944. Although serving well at first, by 1944 the government questioned whether dive-bombers or torpedo-bombers did in fact represent the most efficient contribution which the RNZAF could make towards the war effort in the South Pacific.

Commander-in-Chief United States Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

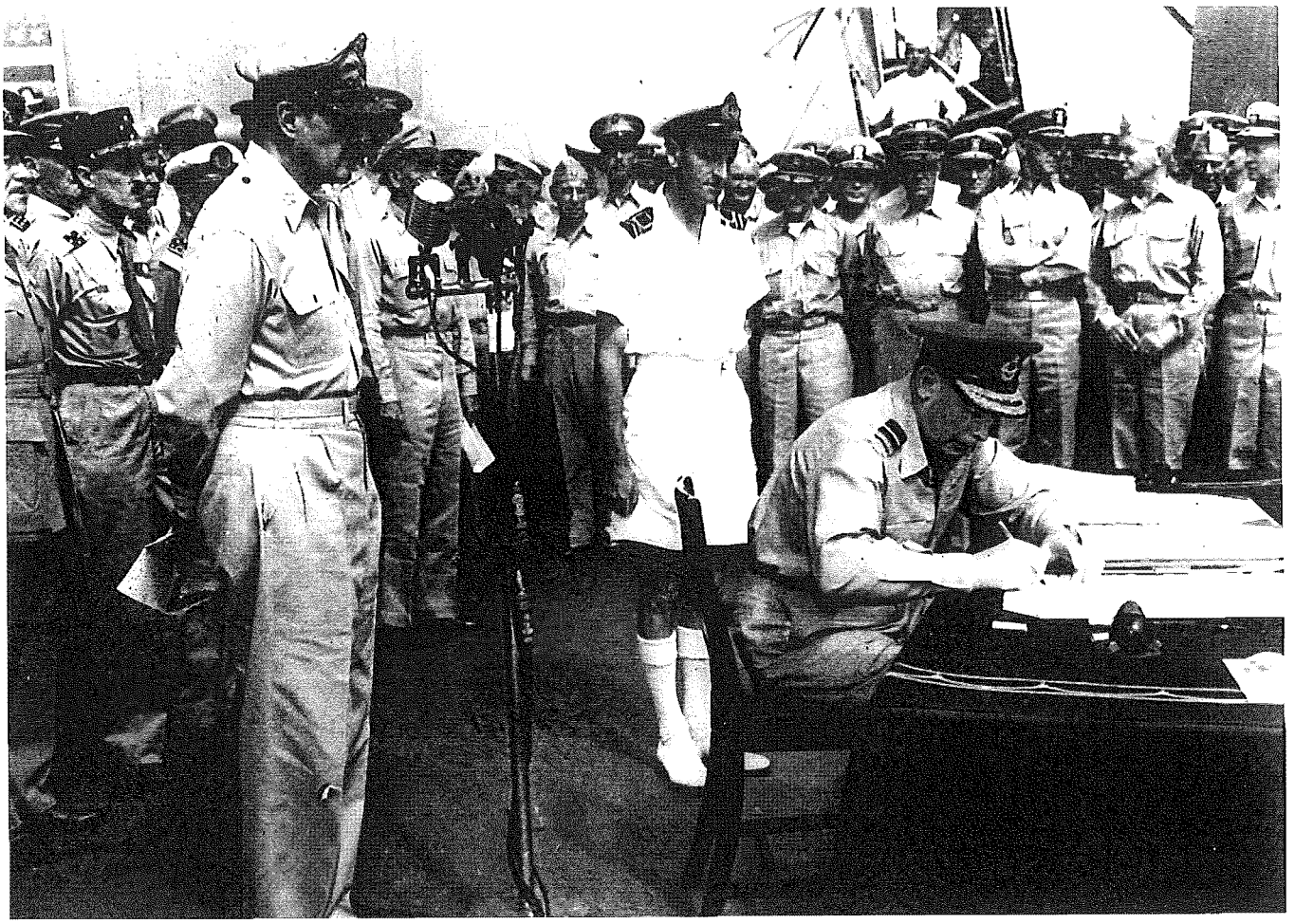
Air Commodore Sidney Wallingford addressing RNZAF personnel as part of another aircrew recruiting campaign in Auckland, 1944. New Zealand's manpower shortage became critical as soon as the country committed itself to the Pacific conflict.

Commander of the New Zealand Air Task Force in the Northern Solomons, and later father of Air New Zealand, Group Captain Geoffrey Roberts, February 1945.

One of the greatest aircraft of the war, especially in the opinion of those aircrew rescued by it. PBY-5A Consolidated Catalinas of 5 Flying-Boat Squadron at Segond Channel, Espiritu Santo, April 1945.



Widely regarded as the most successful fighter used in the Pacific theatre. Groundcrew are dwarfed as they remove the chocks from this RNZAF F4U-1D Chance Vought Corsair on Bougainville, April 1945.



Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt signing the Japanese surrender document as New Zealand's representative aboard the *USS Missouri*, watched by General Douglas MacArthur and others, 2 September 1945.

Chapter Five

Continuing Pressures

No strings on where they may be employed so long as there is something for them to fight.

(Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt, 11 April 1944)

Towards the end of 1943, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Herbert Evatt, announced that conversations would be held in Canberra the following January between Australia and New Zealand to discuss common interests and problems, and future policies in relation to the South Pacific and South-West Pacific Areas. Evatt also expressed the hope that after this conference there would be a wider conference of all powers with interests in this region. The American government, however, held "considerable doubts" about this conference and felt that it would remain premature for some time yet.[1] On 21 January 1944, Australia and New Zealand signed what became known as the Canberra Pact in which they agreed to consult with each other over matters concerning the Pacific, and especially the shape of the post-war Pacific. The document has been called "comprehensive" and "forward-looking", but was less than well received in many American government circles.[2] As Isitt diplomatically put it later, the agreement was "very badly worded and very badly publicised". It was "perhaps regrettable" that no reference to American interests in the defence of the Pacific appeared in the text of the agreement. Its publication at this time may have been a little unwise as it gave Admiral King and many senior officers in Washington the understandable impression that Australia and New Zealand were getting together to resist American entry into the post-war Pacific.[3]

Among other things, the two governments accepted as a recognised principle of international practice that "the construction and use, in time of war, by any power,

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[1] United States Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, to United States Minister in Australia, Nelson Johnson, 8 January 1944, *Foreign Relations of the United States(FRUS): Diplomatic Papers 1944, Volume III The British Commonwealth and Europe*, Washington D.C., United States Government Printing Office 1965, pp. 168-169.

[2] Wood, pp. 314, 317-318. See also Lissington, pp. 77-99.

[3] Isitt to Major-General H. K. Kippenberger, 7 November 1947, NANZ Air 118/81n, Appendix IIIk. See also Isitt to Air Department, 9 February 1944, NANZ EA1 84/3/22.

of naval, military or air installations, in any territory under the sovereignty or control of another power, does not, in itself, afford any basis for territorial claims or right of sovereignty or control after the conclusion of hostilities". They also agreed that the interim administration and ultimate disposal of enemy territories in the Pacific was of vital importance to Australia and New Zealand and consequently this, and especially any changes in sovereignty or control, should only be done "with their agreement and as part of a general Pacific settlement". When the United States Minister in Australia, Nelson T. Johnson, indicated to Evatt the American Government's doubts about the timing of the agreement and especially the proposed Pacific conference, Evatt became "annoyed and somewhat nervous". Evatt explained to Johnson that the Australian Government had been extremely irritated because it had been neither consulted about nor invited to attend the Cairo Conference in November 1943. It was at Cairo that Churchill, Roosevelt and the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-shek, had announced the severe peace terms which they proposed to extract from Japan. Japan's overseas empire would be forfeit and Japan must surrender unconditionally. Australia and New Zealand could perhaps justifiably expect at least to be consulted as their troops were involved in the war, while the Americans could also perhaps be excused for feeling that it was not their place to invite or even consult Britain's Commonwealth allies. Nevertheless, Evatt told Johnson that Australia and New Zealand had been forced by self-interest to confer in regard to their position. Johnson had found Evatt "somewhat shamefaced and yet truculently pleased over the whole proceeding".[4]

An ANZAC Monroe Doctrine.

(Nelson T. Johnson, January 1944)

Johnson felt that the whole agreement could best be described as an "ANZAC Monroe Doctrine". Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, preferred to say: "in substance the two nations have declared a Pacific charter of permanent collaboration and co-operation". The Americans felt that articles of the agreement served "notice on powers not now sovereign in certain territories that cession to them, even of former enemy territory, would be subject to ANZAC concurrence". Furthermore, the

[4] Johnson to Hull, 22 January 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 174-175. On the Cairo Conference see P. Calvocoressi (et al.) *Total War: The Causes and Courses of the Second World War,* London, 1989, pp. 1111-1112.

agreement seemed to assert that no non-British airline could operate to and through the two countries except international trunk routes managed by an international air transport authority agreeable to them. Or failing an international trunk route, Australia and New Zealand would support a system of routes controlled and operated by the Government of the British Commonwealth.[5]

In a statement on the security of the South-West Pacific region, Curtin argued that the fundamental concept was that the best defence of Australia and New Zealand would be a system "based on the island screen to the north of these Dominions". The purpose of such a system of defence would be to preserve the "strategical isolation" of the two countries. Adequately protected and in the hands of Australia, New Zealand and another friendly power, these islands were a bulwark of defence and points of offensive action against an enemy. In enemy hands, however, they represented "spring-boards for offensive action against our mainlands". Curtin confessed that it was "impracticable" for Australia and New Zealand to defend this area unaided and suggested that what was needed was a strong British fleet which could ensure command of the sea and the maintenance of overseas communications. Even after the events of 1942, it was still thought that this fleet might be based in a suitable strategic location such as Singapore. The defence of Australia and New Zealand would rest on three complementary safeguards: national defence, Empire co-operation, and collective security on a regional and world-wide basis.[6]

The American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, made it clear that while they appreciated the need for the Australian and New Zealand Governments to reach agreement between themselves on matters of common concern, he and the President were "frankly disturbed" at the proposal to call a general conference to consider Pacific matters. These matters would require serious discussion, but they felt that the war in the Pacific had not yet reached the stage which would warrant formal discussions. Roosevelt and Hull also wanted agreement reached on a general international security system before attempting to deal with problems of regional security. They were also concerned that such a conference "might well arouse

[5] Johnson to Hull, 22 January 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, p. 176.
[6] "The Defence of the South-West Pacific Region", Statement by Australian Prime Minister, 18 January 1944, Australian Archives, Series A816 Item 104/301/1.

suspicions and possibly bring into focus conflicting opinions on matters which do not require decision at this time", thereby weakening the general Allied war effort.[7]

The Americans were also concerned about the British reaction to the treaty because, although the British had apparently not been consulted, they were likely to support it heartily. For some time it had been evident to the Americans that the British Government was "apprehensive lest Australia and New Zealand come too closely under American influence".[8] Fraser assured Hull that no action would be taken until after he had discussed the matter in Washington on his way to and from the upcoming Prime Ministers' Conference in London in May. The Americans decided quickly that Australia was the "aggressive partner", but that New Zealand did not want to be forgotten either. Australia, they believed, was having "growing pains" and Evatt was "actively cultivating her interest in international affairs".[9] At a conference between State Department officials and the Chinese Secretary, Tswen-ling Tsui, the Americans confided: "frankly we do not take the Australia-New Zealand Agreement too seriously ... we regard it as without effect upon our interests ... it probably reflects in a large measure the desire of Australia and New Zealand as small countries to participate in all major international decisions on a plane of equality with the Great Powers".[10]

As for British reactions, the High Commissioner in Canberra, Sir Ronald Cross, informed the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Viscount Cranborne, that there had been an "atmosphere of secretiveness" leading up to, and during the conference. Cross had received no information about the meetings or the agreement which was clearly on matters on which "we might have expected to have been afforded reasonable opportunity of expressing our views". Once again, he attributed this to Evatt who he believed wanted to "burst upon the world" with a new development in British Empire relations and foreign policy which could be seen to be

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[7] Hull to Johnson and New Zealand Chargé (Childs) for Australian and New Zealand Prime Ministers, 1 February 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 177-178.
[8] Memorandum by Mr. R. B. Stewart of the Division of British Commonwealth Affairs, 1 February 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 178-179.
[9] Childs to Hull, 4 & 8 February 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 180-182.
[10] Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr R.B. Stewart of the Division of British Commonwealth Affairs, 17 February 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 182-184.

free from overseas influence.[11] The Dominions Office informed the War Cabinet that while they had not been in any way consulted about the agreement, they had been assured that a statement would be issued along the lines that the next step would be discussion with the British Government. This statement had not been made, but the point had since been stressed privately by both Fraser and Curtin.[12]

Evatt informed the Dominions Office that the conference had arisen out of "anxiety on the part of Australia and New Zealand concerning United States attempts at infiltration in non-American Pacific Islands south of the Equator and anxiety concerning similar tendencies in Australia and New Zealand". A second motive had been an anxiety that the United Kingdom Government tended to concede too easily to proposals made by the United States concerning the Pacific. The British Government's view was that while they welcomed closer co-operation between Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific, especially on matters of security and defence, they were not prepared to co-operate in calling an international conference on Pacific affairs. Like the Americans, they felt that it remained premature to hold such a conference while so many of the territories were still under enemy occupation.[13]

Chief of Staff to the President, Admiral William D. Leahy, stressed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Hull the importance of the Japanese mandated islands for the security of the United States. The implication in the Australia-New Zealand Agreement, he wrote, that those countries were capable of defending all or any of these islands had "no foundation in reality". On the contrary, he continued, "the military capabilities of Australia and New Zealand not only for the present but for the future are so limited that they cannot assume the defence of their own home territories against any one of the potentially strong Asiatic powers."[14]

When the Secretary of State met with Nash and Fraser in April, he found the New Zealand Prime Minister to be "embarrassed no little about this occurrence". All

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[11] United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canberra, Sir Ronald Cross to SSDA, Viscount Cranborne, 27 January 1944, United Kingdom Public Record Office, London, DO 35/1993, pp. 52-57.
[12] Australia-New Zealand Agreement of 21 January 1944, Memorandum by Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 2 February 1944, Public Record Office, DO 35/1989, pp. 90-91.
[13] ibid.
[14] Joint Chiefs of Staff Paper 698/1 "Australia-New Zealand Agreement", 4 March 1944; Admiral William D. Leahy to Secretary of State, 11 March 1944, NARA, R.G. 218 Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Decimal File 1942-1945, Box 31, C.C.S. 092.2 Australia-New Zealand Agreement.

the way through their conversation, Fraser made a general plea for "understanding, friendliness and wholehearted co-operation in every important respect". Hull stressed that many in Washington had been surprised and even a little shocked by the agreement, and both of the New Zealanders were happy to have the principal blame for it left at the feet of the Australians, and especially Evatt. They also assured Hull that they "did not desire to be considered either as active or leading participants" in calling for the proposed meeting on Pacific affairs, and agreed that it should be postponed until much later in the war, as the Americans proposed.[15]

In a public statement in Washington D.C. on 17 April, Fraser again stressed: "New Zealand realises that the security and future development of the Pacific can only be satisfactorily achieved in co-operation with the United States". The Canberra Agreement, he argued was "a working arrangement between two neighbouring members of the British Commonwealth on matters of mutual concern". The agreement, he argued, obviously trying to pour oil on troubled waters, had been intended as a general announcement of Australian and New Zealand foreign policy aims rather than an attempt to exclude the United States from the area. Fraser went on to praise the American role in the Pacific war and to assure them that he anticipated no difficulties over bases in the area. "I would like to emphasise", he told the Americans, "that the basis of Australian and New Zealand policy is friendship and collaboration with the United States, with Britain, and with other countries with interests and responsibilities in the Pacific".[16]

During his time in Washington, Fraser also spoke to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee to explain that New Zealand had no intention of withdrawing all its forces from the Pacific theatre. Fraser explained that any decisions about New Zealand's war effort had been, and would continue to be, made in accordance with American and British advice. When questioned about the possibility of friction in connection with territorial rights, defence bases, and aviation facilities in the Pacific, he declared that he did not see any reason for disagreement between the British

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[15] Memorandum of Conversation, by Secretary of State, 19 April 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 191-2. For the American perspective see "Background Information on Relations with New Zealand" 27 April 1944, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 96, File ABC 092 Pacific.

[16] Statement by Fraser on Pacific Security, Washington D.C., 17 April 1944, *New Zealand Foreign Policy Statements and Documents 1943-1957*, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972, Document 4, pp. 65-67.

nations in the Pacific and the United States. On the contrary, there were "vast opportunities for co-operation and collaboration and mutual accommodation" on all these matters.[17]

Several days later, Hull met with Curtin, who was also on his way to the Prime Ministers' Conference in London, and stressed that Washington had been "almost flabbergasted" at certain provisions of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement, especially those relating to the settlement of territories after the war. The Australian Prime Minister was slower to accept the postponement of the proposed Pacific meeting, but also less than strong in his defence of Evatt, referring vaguely, according to Hull, to "persons with ambitions".[18]

While Fraser discussed the matter with Cordell Hull, Alister McIntosh and Frank Corner of New Zealand's Department of External Affairs visited members of the State Department's Division of British Commonwealth Affairs. McIntosh told the Americans that the Prime Minister had been quite "bucked up" by his talk with the Secretary of State the previous day, even though Hull had expressed some strong views about the method and tone of the Canberra Agreement. As for the matter of calling a conference, that was "an Australian affair" although New Zealand had agreed to attend if it did go ahead and did not see how it could go back on this. McIntosh also assured the Americans that his government in New Zealand "hope and trust and pray" that the United States would take over the Caroline and Marshall Islands and use them to provide a defensive screen across the Pacific north of the Equator. New Zealand also had little or no interest in most of the Pacific islands listed as potentially important by the United States in 1939, although there was a hope that agreement could be reached regarding Christmas Island, which was claimed by Britain and would be essential for any air route from the America to Hawaii.[19]

John D. Hickerson of the State Department remarked that if Australia and New Zealand really did wish to keep the United States in this part of the Pacific, which he believed was greatly in their interest to do so, then they were adopting a rather strange procedure in the signing and publication of the Canberra Pact. Hickerson reminded

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[17] ibid., pp. 67-68.
[18] Memorandum of Conversation, by Secretary of State, 24 April 1944, *FRUS Vol. III*, pp. 192-4.
[19] "Conversation on United States Relations with New Zealand", Department of State Division of British Commonwealth Affairs, 20 April 1944, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, A9/44/001.

the New Zealanders that the United States was not, nor ever had been an imperialist power, and its only interests were purely strategic. McIntosh replied that there had been a concern, especially in Australia, about American intentions and this had not been helped by various statements by American public officials and the American press. The tone of the agreement, he agreed, had been unfortunate but this was not intentional. The New Zealand delegation had not realised that it was to have been published until the last minute, and the Australians had not meant to be rude: this was merely their way. They always dealt bluntly with the British and the British usually accepted it. The main focus of New Zealand's policy was in fact to keep Great Britain interested in the Pacific area.[20]

My chief uncertainty and worry is the employment of the RNZAF once we cross the equator, and this is not many months away.

(Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt, February 1944)

American historians James A. Winnefeld and Dana J. Johnson note that early operations in the South Pacific Area were an unusually smooth example of inter-service and international co-operation because there was more than enough battle to go around for everybody. "The press of battle", they argue, "was such that there was no time or incentive for role and mission controversies to appear". Air operations in the Solomons had included everything from supporting amphibious assaults and defending the air in the region, to attacking enemy naval forces and launching bomber strikes on Japanese bases and installations throughout the island chain up to Rabaul. Survival of the Guadalcanal beachhead had been in jeopardy early in the campaign and the Japanese fiercely contested control of the air over the battlefield until 1944. As a result, the Solomons campaign from 1942 to 1944 was in many respects a "high-water mark of jointness and unity of effort in air operations". Despite the problems of personality, direction and equipment actually experienced by the Allies, Winnefeld and Johnson claim that never before and rarely since has there been the same degree of co-operation, co-ordination, and willingness to put service interests aside in prosecuting an air campaign. In many ways it was this campaign that decided the outcome of the war in the Pacific because although many bloody battles were to

[20] ibid.

follow, "the major issue was resolved between 1942-1944 in a campaign of attrition that saw Japanese air and naval forces bled white."[21]

The most important objective of the South-West Pacific air campaign had been Rabaul, one of the finest natural harbours in the South Pacific, which Japan had transformed into a major fleet base and surrounded with a cluster of airfields and military installations. By February 1944, this once great base was under relentless air attack from Bougainville and the western end of New Britain and it was clear that there was no need for it to be seized. Rabaul was to be neutralised rather than invaded, which meant constant attack from the air to destroy its defences and finally to isolate it from communications and supply. Once effectively neutralised, Rabaul would be by-passed. A few nearby islands were taken to complete its encirclement, but by early 1944 CARTWHEEL was effectively achieved. According to American Intelligence reports, this reduction and isolation was complete by 19 February 1944. On this date, "after two months of bitter air combat, the Japanese gave battle for the last time". The last Japanese air battle in defence of Rabaul cost them 27 certain and three probable losses out of a force of 50 planes, after which all but a few of their planes fled and the most important phase of the South Pacific Campaign had been won. On 9 March, American bombers attacked without fighter escort for the first time, and by April all Japanese planes were listed as unserviceable. By May 1944, no surface vessel bigger than a barge dared to venture into the harbour that had once held some 30,000 tons of shipping and sheltered an important part of the Japanese navy. Apart from a few transient transport planes and fly-by-night float planes, the only evidence that Rabaul was once the chief air centre in the South Pacific was the bomb pitted air fields. Rabaul as a town had ceased to exist and major supply and ammunition dumps had been "pounded so effectively that it was hardly worth bombing them any more."[22]

Airfields had from the beginning been the first priority but as air opposition waned, and Rabaul became almost completely destroyed, other targets were

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[21] J. A. Winnefeld & D. J. Johnson, *Joint Air Operations: Pursuit of Unity in Command and Control, 1942-1991*, Santa Monica, CA., Rand, 1993, pp. 23, 30-34, and General Millard F. Harmon "The Army in the South Pacific" (no date 1943) Personal Papers of Millard F. Harmon, South Pacific History Folder, United States Army Military History Institute Archives, Carlisle, PA. See also Craven & Cate, Vol. IV, pp. 88-89.

[22] "The Reduction of Rabaul, 19 February to 15 May 1944", Office of Naval Combat Intelligence, South Pacific Forces Headquarters, 8 June 1944, p. 1, NANZ Air 1 120/190; United States Strategic Bombing Survey, (Pacific), *The Allied Campaign Against Rabaul,* Naval Analysis Division, 1946.

concentrated on. By May, the 24 hour surveillance and harassing of Rabaul could begin. From 19 February to 15 May the Allies dropped an average of 85 tons of bombs on Rabaul per day. According to one report, fighter bomber patrols dramatised Allied air supremacy by deliberately dropping a single bomb on each of the major air fields every half hour.[23] The Japanese, however, continued to attempt to repair the fields to provide landing for transient transport planes, keep their men busy for the sake of morale, and to attract Allied bombers away from other targets and over their strongest anti-aircraft fire. Once enemy air power in the area had been overcome, barges also became important objectives because they were the only source of supply still operating apart from the occasional submarine which attempted to deliver supplies to or evacuate important personnel from beleaguered positions in the Northern Solomons - Bismarcks Area.[24] Despite the destruction handed out to Rabaul, however, it continued to be a dangerous place for New Zealand airmen. On a good day it was approximately one hour and twenty minutes flying time from Piva Strip at Empress Augusta Bay in Bougainville; "a long wait for dangerous action." Bombing Rabaul, according to one airman, remained "like putting your head inside the lion's mouth and picking his back teeth."[25]

Meanwhile, No. 1 (Islands) Group Headquarters reported that they were now happily settled in at a new site at Guadalcanal and were thankfully back in touch with Admiral Fitch. Buckley admitted to Isitt that at Santo they had been cut off from the centre of control and information. Unfortunately, he told Isitt, the RNZAF's continued use of the Kittyhawk was starting to have a noticeable affect on the morale of the pilots, and this was not helped when they were relegated to second-rate jobs, especially when these were proving quite expensive in terms of casualties. Fitch and other senior American officers were generally concerned that New Zealand pilots were not flying better aircraft, and felt that with Corsairs they would be able to set a very high standard. Fitch also signalled Isitt to say that he wished to help in any way possible in re-arming the RNZAF with Corsairs. Buckley reported that even the

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[23] "The Reduction of Rabaul", pp. 3, 6.

[24] Aircraft Anti-Submarine Operations Instructions, 6 December 1944, Operation Plan No. 6-45, 8 April 1945, Headquarters of Commander Aircraft Northern Solomons, Hannah Papers, RNZAF Archives Wigram.

[25] S. C. Scott, "Facets of Air Force Life in the Solomons and New Britain, 1944-45", RNZAF Archives 90/349, pp. 1,5. See also "Review of RNZAF Operations Against Rabaul", NANZ Air 1 127/20/8.

Americans admitted that the New Zealand pilots' training, finish and dash, together with beautiful team work, were "the best in this area." He did feel, however, that the RNZAF should endeavour to increase its pilot numbers to something like the American establishment of 32 pilots per squadron. At the moment, for example, 17 Squadron was doing "very well indeed", but their casualties had been high and they were now reduced to only 16 pilots.[26]

When General Dewing made a two-week liaison visit to the South Pacific Area during January, he emphasised the importance to future British operations in undeveloped tropical areas of what could be learnt from American experience and methods in the South Pacific Area. The first thing he noted was the vast scale of American engineering capability in the Pacific where roads and airfields appeared out of the jungle in a fraction of the time it would have taken in Malaya, for example. "Our British conception of the scale on which engineering works of all kinds can and must be done", he reported, "generally falls far short of what the Americans have shown to be possible". At Noumea, for example, they had constructed port facilities to take large ocean-going vessels easily, huge storage facilities and mechanical and aircraft engineering depots "better equipped than most of the repair workshops in England". And at Espiritu Santo the Americans could conduct naval repairs in huge dry-docks, and had constructed airfields "as good as any in the United States" out of what had only recently been jungle.[27]

As for Allied co-operation, Dewing noted that the relations of both 3 New Zealand Division and the RNZAF with the American commanders appeared to be excellent, and the New Zealanders benefited from the readiness of the Americans to supply all their material needs and more. Even 3 Division which preferred to receive its needs from New Zealand, naturally appreciated the liberal treatment received from the Americans when New Zealand failed them. American systems of planning and command were strange to anyone trained in British methods and inevitably caused difficulties, he explained, but there seemed to be a much closer and more intimate association and understanding between the New Zealand and American commanders

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[26] Buckley to Isitt, 14 January 1944, NANZ Air 100/4.

[27] Report on Visit to South Pacific Area by Major-General R. H. Dewing, 2 February 1944, United States Air Force History Support Office, Microfilm Call No. 820.153-1, Frames 1497-1508, pp. 1-2.

in the South Pacific than between Australian and American commanders in the South-West Pacific. Dewing was also impressed by how much better relations between American Army, Navy and Marine forces appeared to be under Halsey in the South Pacific than under MacArthur in the South-West Pacific.[28]

Back in Washington, however, Air Commodore Findlay was finding himself getting a little "browned off" reading the constant eulogies about the American air forces in the South Pacific. He was sure that they were all well deserved, but there was never any reference to New Zealand's part in the Pacific war, so he was seeking help in getting more publicity for the RNZAF in America. On the other hand, however, he was very pleased with the aircraft allocations for 1944. New Zealand had received "more than justice" from the Munitions Assignment Committee, he told Isitt, "so much so that the other bidders are a bit jealous of our treatment." This generous treatment was partly due to Group Captain Seabrook's excellent groundwork, but mainly because of "our good friend Admiral McCain". On a less positive note, Findlay had been somewhat at a loss when the committee asked him about the RNZAF's proposed lending or selling of a Lodestar transport aircraft to Union Airways at a time when it was pleading for more Dakotas for operational transport use. New Zealand was also negotiating with Britain for two Sunderland flying boats for operational transport and another two for Tasman Airways. These aircraft were received from the Allocations Committee for a specific purpose and they told Findlay that that they were not interested in civil concerns and would not be impressed by such moves.[29]

General Jamieson, of the United States War Department, approved the immediate shipment of ten Kittyhawks to New Zealand after Findlay informed him that they were urgently needed by New Zealand squadrons to make good combat attrition in the South Pacific theatre. The Air Department in Wellington was becoming increasingly concerned at the shortage of Kittyhawks for the three squadrons in the forward area where the wastage rate had been about 13 aircraft per month since October 1943. This rate was showing a tendency to increase, and was aggravated by the fact that the last five aircraft from the 1943 allocations had been

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[28] ibid., pp. 4-5.
[29] Findlay to Isitt, 15 February 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.

damaged in a railway accident in transit to California for shipping to the Pacific. Findlay was grateful for Jamieson's prompt action, but forced to report that there appeared to have been "some lag in implementing your instructions", leaving New Zealand in an embarrassing position. Unless these aircraft could be supplied by mid March, along with the 1944 allocations, it might prove impossible to maintain New Zealand's effort at full strength. If only supplies could be made to tide over this crucial period, then there would be sufficient Corsairs becoming available to continue.[30]

Isitt wrote to his predecessor, now at Air Force Headquarters in New Delhi, early in February to keep him in touch and ask his advice. The RNZAF tally of enemy aircraft in the Pacific was now 96 confirmed to the fighter squadrons, four to Venturas and three to Hudsons, along with some 20 probables. Unfortunately, he informed Goddard, RNZAF casualties had also gone up recently, especially against Rabaul. Isitt was looking forward to re-equipping his fighter squadrons with Corsairs which he hoped would be in operation by early March. The Hudsons too were being steadily replaced with Venturas which would be used in a more offensive role against ground targets, shipping and Japanese vegetable gardens. Isitt also planned to augment his fighter programme by taking about 50 pilots from Canada and withdrawing some from Britain who were surplus to RAF requirements. However, his "chief uncertainty and worry", he confided to Goddard, was "the employment of the RNZAF once we cross the equator, and this is not many months away." Admirals Halsey and Fitch had both assured him that they wanted to keep the RNZAF with them, but Isitt foresaw Halsey's force assuming the same role and composition as the Central Pacific Task Force, and unless New Zealand squadrons embarked on ships, it was unlikely there would be a position for them under Halsey. This would leave two possibilities, one of which was South-East Asia, about which he hoped Goddard could provide some guidance. The other possibility was to become part of the Allied force in the South-West Pacific. "This", Isitt confessed to Goddard, "I am not very keen on

[30] Memo from Jamieson to General Arnold, Commanding General Army Air Forces, 5 January 1944, Findlay to Jamieson, 19 January 1944, United States Air Force History Support Office, Microfilm A1473, Frames 1807-1809.

for various reasons, but the recent inter-Government Conference will probably result in closer collaboration and may force me to move in this direction."[31]

Isitt hoped to visit Australia to obtain first-hand information on RAAF organisation and plans, especially the operational organisation and chain of command within the Allied Air Forces. He would then be able to advise New Zealand government ministers on this should the RNZAF be called upon to collaborate with the RAAF in the Pacific.[32] As Nevill told his counterpart in Australia, Air Commodore John McCauley, "the future of the South Pacific Area is vague, and consequently the reorganisation and employment of our squadrons in this area is equally uncertain". However, he continued, there were many advantages in a closer association of the two Dominions' air forces in the Pacific and, in fact, it was "only a logical development of the decisions taken at the recent Conference in Canberra" which envisaged a much closer liaison than heretofore. McCauley replied that as long as New Zealand units were assigned to the South Pacific, a grouping together of RAAF and RNZAF units would present difficulties. However, he was prepared to advise Nevill of any reorganisation that might facilitate the grouping together of the two.[33]

Isitt made an extensive tour of Australia and New Guinea during the following month and was able to discuss "various matters of common interest" with the Australian Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Sir George Jones. He also discussed the implications of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement, although the matter was still "a little hot to deal with in other than general terms". Both agreed that closer collaboration was sound in principle, but that their air forces were currently so committed that any attempt to re-align them at that stage would result in wasted effort and loss of efficiency. As well as visiting various Australian aircraft production plants, Isitt met with Berendsen and Prime Minister Curtin in Canberra before travelling north. In Brisbane he met with the Operational Commander of the RAAF, Air Vice-Marshal William Bostock, as well as General Kenney and General MacArthur. Isitt found Kenney to be a very shrewd and practical man while

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[31] Isitt to Goddard, 1 February 1944, NANZ Air 100/3.
[32] Isitt to Wilkes (New Zealand Liaison Officer in Australia 1940-1946), 29 February 1944, NANZ Air 100/11.
[33] Neville to McCauley, 24 January 1944; McCauley to Neville, 3 February 1944, NANZ Air 100/11.

MacArthur he described as "a very forceful personality [who] marshalls his facts and expresses himself most clearly, but does not encourage interruption or discussion". To Isitt, MacArthur looked very fit while his staff looked rather jaded and worn. In the far north of Australia and even parts of New Guinea, Isitt found Australian squadrons with very good facilities, but suffering from the oppressive climate and complaining of "no war and very little to do".[34]

Marked evidence of the cohesion of the British Commonwealth to our Allies and enemies.

(Lieutenant-General Edward Puttick, February 1944)

On 19 February, General Puttick prepared an appreciation for the Prime Minister on the problem of withdrawing one or other of the two New Zealand divisions from the war to relieve New Zealand's growing manpower crisis. The problem was that in order to increase, or even maintain, the output of meat and dairy produce urgently needed for Britain and for American forces in the South Pacific Area, New Zealand required something like ten thousand extra workers for farms, dairy factories and freezing works. The only likely source of this manpower was the armed forces, and the government needed to be sure that the withdrawal could be arranged to cause the least disadvantage to the New Zealand war effort. Puttick found that practically all military considerations favoured the retention of 2 Division overseas, while he was aware that there might be political considerations favouring the retention of 3 Division in the Pacific. As a soldier, he had drawn his conclusions purely from military factors and would leave Fraser and his fellow statesmen to balance these against the political. On the question of whether New Zealand should be concentrating more on food production or on fighting, Puttick also declined to comment.[35]

When the question of Europe or the Pacific was considered, Puttick had to admit that Germany was still the principal and most dangerous enemy. Germany still threatened Britain and was affecting British production, shipping and morale. Although unlikely, he considered that Germany could still win the war by submarine,

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[34] Isitt to Air Department, 11 April 1944, NANZ EA1 84/3/22.

[35] Lieutenant-General E. Puttick, Appreciation of the Problem of the Withdrawal of One or Other of the 2nd or 3rd New Zealand Divisions, 19 February 1944, *Documents,* Vol. II, Appendix I, pp. 449-455.

air attack or some new invention. On the other hand, Japan was now no threat to any Allied population except for China and was not affecting Allied production or morale, nor reducing shipping to any appreciable extent. It was felt that the loss of a battle-experienced division would be more serious from Europe than from the Pacific where the war could still drag on for some time yet. New Zealand's effort in Europe greatly stiffened British morale and was "marked evidence of the cohesion of the British Commonwealth to our Allies and enemies". As well as this, however, New Zealand did have to consider that Australia was adamant that Pacific nations, especially Australia and New Zealand, should be concentrating on the Pacific war. Puttick felt that this was a result originally of Australia's fear of Japanese invasion and therefore desire to concentrate all possible force to push the Japanese as far away as possible, and secondly, the political difficulties created by comparisons between the New Zealand and Australian attitude to the global war. The best solution to this problem, and to any consideration that might be given to that section of the American population which regarded the Pacific war as more important, was for New Zealand to become fully involved in the war against Japan once the European conflict was finished. Moreover, New Zealand's current effort in the Pacific in providing troops for Fiji, Tonga, New Caledonia, and Norfolk Island, as well as naval and air forces should already be enough to counter any negativity in Australian or American opinion.[36]

Finally there were other considerations to take into account. New Zealand's 2 Division was then engaged in full strength against German forces in Italy where there appeared to be little or no surplus Allied strength. The Pacific division was currently serving in garrison duties close to Japanese forces on Nissan and Treasury Islands as part of the overall strategic isolation of Rabaul. There was also the problem of shipping back to New Zealand which appeared to be all but impossible in the case of 2 Division, while 3 Division was about half the size and five times closer to New Zealand. While 2 Division had had heavier battle loses, 3 Division was serving in an oppressive tropical climate with poor amenities and would have to be rested more frequently to prevent heavy losses from illness. Finally, there was the question of re-employment of returned troops. Puttick felt that men of 3 Division would proceed to

[36] ibid.

reinforce 2 Division far more readily than men from 2 Division would proceed to the Pacific. Men from the Middle East would almost certainly flatly refuse to proceed to 3 Division so long as there were fit men in New Zealand who had not been overseas. Under the circumstances, Puttick felt he had no choice, and the other Chiefs of Staff agreed with him, to recommend the retention of 2 Division abroad while returning 3 Division home as soon as the operational situation permitted.[37]

At the same time the American Chargé d'Affairs, Prescott Childs, completed a report on New Zealand's manpower problem which was critical of the New Zealand government's lack of a clear-cut policy. As an example, Childs told the State Department that while some thousands had been released from the army in New Zealand, many of these had subsequently joined the air force and only a small proportion had actually gone on to the land.[38]

Meanwhile in London, Walter Nash discussed New Zealand's growing manpower shortage with the British Government. Britain's Chiefs of Staff considered that as New Zealand's navy consisted of only a little over 8,000 "highly trained men of excellent quality", no reduction should be made from this number. New Zealand was currently sending 2,500 men a year to train in Canada under the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme and another 500 to the United Kingdom to join the RAF as air crew. The Secretary of State for Air already agreed that the number being sent to Canada should be reduced to 1,200 per year which would give some relief, but did not want any reduction in the small number being sent directly to Britain. As for the Pacific, the chiefs felt that it would be unwise to retract from the air force's commitment of 20 squadrons for this theatre because "a force of smaller dimensions would be incommensurate with the part which New Zealand naturally desires to play in the Pacific war in which air operations are of such importance".[39]

The British Chiefs of Staff placed great importance on the continued presence of the New Zealand Army division now in Italy. "From every point of view", they stressed, "we derive great advantage from the participation of these forces in the war against Germany". Thus, even if it were possible, they would be "very much averse"

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[37] ibid., pp. 449-455.

[38] "New Zealand's Role in the War: Food Production versus Military Service", 22 February 1944, NARA, R.G. 59, Box 5117, File 847H.24/337.

to the removal of this division, or even its reduction, at least until after the battle for Rome had been won. As for the two brigade groups making up 3 Division in the Solomon Islands, the chiefs considered operations in this area of secondary importance compared to those in Italy. Moreover, operations in the Solomons appeared to have reached their successful conclusion in a campaign which was not dependent on land forces to the same extent as in Europe. Perhaps most importantly, the Chiefs agreed that the movement to New Zealand of these two brigades would present much less of a shipping problem than any large-scale withdrawal from the Mediterranean. The best plan, therefore, would be the temporary withdrawal of the Pacific division for food production. It was hoped that future developments in Europe would allow the withdrawal of part or all of 2 Division in time to constitute a full division for further operations against Japan in 1945. "We realise the importance which the New Zealand Government attaches to New Zealand forces playing their full part in the Pacific war", the British chiefs concluded. They suggested, however, that there would be "ample scope for the employment there of a New Zealand Division in 1945 and that in the meanwhile New Zealand can be well represented in that theatre by her Navy and Air Force".[40]

Even though the British Chiefs of Staff had no responsibility for material allocation, supply, or operational control within the Pacific, they still attempted to defend the RNZAF in Washington. At a Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting on 26 February 1944, the size of the RNZAF was discussed and the British chiefs urged that apart from a small reduction in the number of men to be sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme, no appreciable reduction in the size of the air force to be maintained by New Zealand was advisable.[41]

The Air Department in Wellington was pleased to hear of the reduction in numbers required to be sent to Canada and even hoped that a reduction could be made in the numbers being sent directly to Britain. Although the number of personnel needed for the Pacific was predicted to continue to rise, by this time it was also expected that training for the Empire Air Training Scheme would cease altogether

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[39] United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff memo 0.Z.995, 23 February 1944, in Nash to Fraser, 29 February 1944, NANZ EA1 59/2/124.
[40] ibid.

about September 1944. There were, however, considerable advantages in New Zealand's continued use of the Empire Air Training Scheme. If the RNZAF was to attempt to train all the air crew required for its Pacific programme in New Zealand, it would require large numbers of additional ground staff, particularly skilled tradesmen whose numbers had already been reduced as far as possible. The maintenance of the 20 squadron programme involved the return from Canada of 400 trained pilots, wireless operators and air gunners per year. The alternative of training this number in New Zealand would not only be most expensive in personnel, but would require a complete new training station for which additional aircraft were unlikely to be available.[42]

At the same time, Isitt had to assure the Minister of Defence that he realised the seriousness of the situation and that he and his staff were "very much alive to New Zealand's manpower problems". For this reason, his units were "continually under examination with a view to saving manpower". Moreover, Nevill warned Buckley at No. 1 (Islands) Group that he was apprehensive about the effect on the government of leaving trained operational units in New Zealand awaiting plans for their full employment in the Pacific. "Apart from the embarrassment of having such units unemployed in the Dominion", he told Buckley, "the manpower difficulties here are such that there might be serious repercussions on the whole RNZAF programme". The present 20 squadron programme had been approved and their employment in the forward area agreed, so Nevill would rather see them go forward in anticipation of full employment. Once again, the air force was criticised for lacking clear higher direction on policy matters and, especially, for enlisting personnel without any clear idea as to what they were being enlisted for. However the Manning Branch was often faced with the problem of being expected to staff the RNZAF for commitments that were not yet known, and under these conditions definite planning of requirements was extremely difficult.[43]

The Solomon Islands Air Commander was Major-General Ralph J. Mitchell, a United States Marine Corps officer described as a "somewhat academic type, although

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[41] "Combined Chiefs of Staff - New Zealand Manpower", 26 February 1944, NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, p. 3.
[42] Minister of External Affairs to Nash, 18 March 1944, NANZ EA 1 59/2/124.
[43] RNZAF Manpower Narrative, NANZ Air 118/81m, pp. 64-67.

firm in the matter of decisions ... a brisk, no-nonsense leader who had no patience with people sitting around discussing the war when they should have been out winning it".[44] Mitchell wrote to Isitt early in March 1944 that he would soon be visiting New Zealand and the thought of the fishing there already had him "in a state of mind which might be termed unbalanced". Mitchell was hoping that the Rotorua district would require "a rather lengthy personal inspection" by Isitt at the same time. He also noted that he had recently had dinner with four senior RNZAF officers. They were, he said, "a splendid foursome and it is a distinct privilege to have them with us. All seem happy as can be, and reiterate their complete satisfaction with accommodations, food and duty." Mitchell had just sent off a list of recommendations for Distinguished Flying Crosses and Air Medals because "our New Zealand boys ... have been wonderful. Never have I served with better. They have established an unbeatable reputation for daring and loyalty and have gone on with this business in a most inspiring, uncomplaining and determined manner." Now he was hoping for "big fish in New Zealand [and] bigger fish in the Pacific".[45]

Isitt was alarmed to hear from Colonel Salmon that although in no sense hostile or adversely critical, there was also "a small feeling" there that New Zealand should improve its aircraft availability. Yet day to day serviceability, Isitt explained to Salmon, depended on so many factors such as the amount of flying being done, the amount of enemy action, supply of spares, as well as maintenance and replacement programmes. For example, of the 34 Kittyhawks on Bougainville during February, there had usually been about 24 serviceable which was often equal to or above the ratios for other fighter types on the island. When there were less available, this was due to their extensive use in operations, and the difficulty of servicing the Kittyhawk's Allison engine which had a much shorter life than that of the Corsair, for example. Moreover, there had recently been a breakdown in the supply of spares from American sources. Despite this, Isitt had received several reassurances from American commanders that the standard of New Zealand servicing was extremely high, the New Zealanders always produced the aircraft promised and it was relatively unusual for a New Zealand aircraft to turn back because of mechanical trouble.

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[44] Holmes, pp. 66, 72.
[45] Mitchell to Isitt, 2 March 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

Admiral Kendall, for example, had told him that RNZAF Ventura flights operating under his command had established "a standard of operations which was going to be very hard to live up to", and Isitt felt sure that he meant it.[46]

Shortly afterwards, Isitt was pleased to hear that the fishing at Taupo and Tongariro was indeed going very well and he hoped he could persuade other members of the South Pacific command to join General Mitchell. On a more serious note, he informed Admiral Carney at Halsey's headquarters that he had been discussing the future employment of the RNZAF with Prime Minister Peter Fraser and he agreed that an active role was "essential for the satisfactory employment of our Air Force and for the prestige of New Zealand". There would be "no strings on where they may be employed so long as there [was] something for them to fight". Isitt was hoping to discuss the matter in Washington in June when Fraser would also be there on his way back from Europe. In the meantime, he had instructed his team in Washington to speak off the record to McCain and also to Air Marshal Sir William Welsh, head of the RAF delegation there, "with a view to finding us an active role somewhere".[47]

Reports from the Solomon Islands were that Fitch already had more fighters than he could properly employ. Buckley wrote to Nevill, now Vice-Chief of Air Staff in Wellington, that unless the Japanese staged a miraculous come-back then this situation would probably continue. "They do not appear to have anything in line for us further forward than Bougainville", he informed Nevill, "although I have no doubt that when we have our Corsairs we shall get into the front line again." Fitch's Headquarters was unwilling to forecast his requirements until the situation in Rabaul and New Ireland was cleared up, but advised that in the meantime, the RNZAF should continue with its expansion programme as planned. Buckley's concern, however, was that this would leave RNZAF squadrons in the islands only half employed or doing garrison duty in the back areas. He also had the problem of not knowing where and when to established bases and set up service units for his squadrons.[48]

Unfortunately, visits to Australia and New Guinea, and duties in Wellington kept Isitt from making his anticipated inspection of the North Island fishing spots but, as he explained to Mitchell, his over-riding problem at that moment was the future

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[46] Salmon to Isitt, 6 March 1944; Isitt to Salmon, 11 March 1944, both NANZ Air 100/10.
[47] Isitt to Vice-Admiral R. B. Carney, 11 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

employment of RNZAF squadrons from the Pacific. There was no doubt, he knew, that South Pacific would shortly go on a base footing and the squadrons there would be on garrison and local defence duties, some anti-shipping and routine patrols, but no active fighting. While he realised that someone had to do this, and the RNZAF was prepared to accept its share of these duties, he was most anxious to keep a reasonable percentage of New Zealand squadrons in active operations and had the support of the government in this. "We would like, if possible," he informed Mitchell, "to be employed in the Pacific and with United States Naval and Marine Air. Failing this, anywhere we can find some fighting." The only theatre Isitt hoped not to be involved in was South-West Pacific where, he was informed, the Australian air force had some fifty squadrons of which less than five per cent were actively employed. "I believe", he wrote, "if we go there we will be the last of the Air Forces to be deployed for active operations." He hoped that Mitchell would be able to stress this to McCain and "give us a leg-up with him and tell him we are worth employing".[49]

Isitt also hoped that Findlay could do the same in Washington and approach McCain about keeping the RNZAF attached to the United States Navy with whom they had built mutual esteem and an excellent working relationship. At their last meeting in San Francisco, McCain had even suggested to Isitt the possibility of the RNZAF being re-equipped with long-range bombers and Isitt felt that this would suit them admirably. It was now obvious that South Pacific Area was going to be reduced and if the RNZAF was not careful it would be stuck with local and garrison defence work. This was not his desire nor, he believed, that of his government. Once again Isitt stressed that South-West Pacific Area was very much the last alternative they would like to adopt. Isitt's recent trip to the area had more than ever confirmed his previously held opinion that the RNZAF should not go to this area except as a last resort. "I am afraid", he warned Findlay, "we would get a very poor spin from the United States Army Air Corps [sic] and from our Australian cousins and we would also find ourselves on a local garrison and defence job."[50]

The problem, Isitt explained to the government, was that throughout the war there had been a "lack of spontaneous planning by the higher United States staffs for

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[48] Buckley to Air Commodore Arthur de T. Nevill, 18 March 1944, NANZ Air 100/4.
[49] Isitt to Mitchell, 15 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

the development of the RNZAF to meet future requirements in the Pacific". The result was that the Air Department had been forced to plan well in advance to meet the anticipated needs of American commanders in order to secure the participation of RNZAF squadrons in South Pacific Area. The present plan which had been approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington in December 1942, provided for 19 RNZAF squadrons of which at least 14 were intended for operations in the forward and combat zone. The original plan provided for the establishment of:

5 bomber-reconnaissance (Ventura)
5 fighter (Corsair and Kittyhawk)
4 torpedo-bomber (Avenger)
2 dive-bomber (Dauntless)
2 flying-boat (Catalina)
1 transport (C-47 and C-60)

In August 1943, steps had been taken to simplify supply and maintenance by replacing the dive-bomber and torpedo-bomber squadrons with additional fighters, and this was approved by the Munitions Assignment Committee in January 1944 for completion by October.[51]

As the South Pacific Area was reduced, however, no further active role was assigned to New Zealand squadrons which would remain there on garrison duty. While New Zealand was prepared to accept a semi-passive role for at least some of its squadrons for parts of the war, it could not accept this role indefinitely and the government was urged to allow planning to continue for a more active share in the war. At this stage, the three options were to move forward with Admirals Halsey and Fitch, hopefully into the Carolines where a role could be found for the RNZAF's short-range naval reconnaissance and fighter aircraft. This would greatly ease supply problems and would "preserve the co-operation and esteem which has already been established". The second option was to join South-East Asia Command. It appeared likely that the RNZAF would be welcomed there, but this would involve the withdrawal of squadrons from the Pacific to India for re-equipment with British aircraft, and further training. A RNZAF group could easily be established in South-

[50] Isitt to Findlay, 6 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[51] Isitt to Fraser, "Operational Employment of the RNZAF in the Pacific Theatre", 5 April 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2. For exact figures see NANZ Air 118/32 pp. 204-205.

East Asia Command and manning problems could be eased by the posting of RNZAF personnel already serving with the Royal Air Force, many of whom were in this command already. Supply and manning of these squadrons would then become the responsibility of the RAF. The third option, that of moving to South-West Pacific Area with Australia, appeared to be the most logical and would no doubt be regarded as a practical acknowledgment of the close identity of interests between the two countries. However, supply problems would be difficult in a United States Army command, and it was strongly felt that the experience of the Royal Australian Air Force was "not entirely happy" and that a still smaller New Zealand contingent would receive even less consideration, especially regarding their desire to serve in the combat zone.[52]

Isitt explained to Fraser that he regretted that "the lack of forward planning by the higher United States staffs in Washington" seemed to relegate the bulk of the RNZAF to garrison duties for the immediate future. New Zealand's object, he urged his Prime Minister, must be to press for employment in the combat zone, and even more importantly, to develop plans for the ultimate employment of the RNZAF in active operations against Japan in order that adequate representation is secured at the termination of hostilities.[53] The official history narrative suggests here that it is difficult to know exactly what transpired in Washington during March and April 1944, and what the actual reasons for the decision to restrict RNZAF operations to the South Pacific were. However, it was difficult for the narrator to avoid the feeling that neither the Americans nor the New Zealanders were being completely honest in their expressions of opinion and one possible conclusion was that "the root cause of the matter was that we were more trouble than our small force was worth".[54]

Admiral Carney wrote to Isitt on 20 April that he and Halsey hoped to be visiting New Zealand soon. Moreover, he added, "your account of Ralph Mitchell's vacation at Taupo has completely upset me and I find that I can only attend to my work with the utmost difficulty". South Pacific command was very much in a state of flux and, he confided to Isitt, "the administrative character of most of the business is not much to the liking of those of us who have been accustomed to more active

[52] ibid.
[53] ibid.

times". The redeployment of air forces was moving forward fairly rapidly and it appeared as though the RNZAF would "continue on their present tasks until the northern end of our axis is cleaned up, or South-West Pacific takes it over, or your outfit is moved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to some other territory."[55] Isitt warned Carney that he only had two weeks left before the end of the fishing season. The weather would be cold and accommodation taxed to the limit, but the last few days of the season were generally very good. He was very pleased at hints that the RNZAF would be tied to the United States Navy which he was convinced was in the New Zealanders best interests, and he doubted a happier association could be found in any other area.[56] At this stage Isitt believed prospects for an active role with Halsey's forces appeared good, and he was confident that this was Fraser's hope too.[57]

There was a mutual esteem between the American Navy and Marine Air Forces and the RNZAF, Isitt told Air Vice-Marshal Anthony Paxton in London, which it would be a pity not to exploit. Moreover, Halsey and Fitch were both "very fine leaders and great to work with". Isitt had convinced the New Zealand government to keep the RNZAF actively employed and they were prepared to let New Zealand squadrons go anywhere to find the enemy; unfortunately, where this might be was still in the lap of the gods. Things were going well in the Pacific, but even in Bougainville, Isitt admitted, the fighting seemed to be finished and there was little left to do except "rattle the skeleton". In the meantime, he hoped to continue sending a number of pilots who had completed an operational tour in the Pacific to Europe because, he told Paxton, "all our pilots have a great desire to serve with the RAF".[58] Isitt had his "feelers out in all directions" looking for a role for the air force and if nothing came up, he hoped to meet Fraser in Washington for discussions there.[59]

On 24 April 1944, Puttick detailed New Zealand's war effort to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington and especially reviewed New Zealand's decision to reduce 3 Division. The farmers, carpenters and skilled labourers released from the division would enable the increased demands for New Zealand's farm produce to be

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[54] NANZ Air 118/81n, Chapter 3, pp. 2-3.
[55] Carney to Isitt, 20 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.
[56] Isitt to Carney, 2 May 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.
[57] Isitt to Findlay, 20 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[58] Isitt to Air Vice-Marshal A. L. Paxton, 29 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/3.
[59] Isitt to Wilkes, 28 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/11.

met and prove a "valuable contribution" to the Allied effort in the Pacific. Moreover, he continued, New Zealand still possessed a small but valuable navy and a relatively powerful air force including 19 combat squadrons. He had, he said, always personally believed that the correct policy for New Zealand was to maintain "as strong an air force as possible since while the United States was capable of providing sufficient ground forces in the Pacific area, no commander ever had sufficient air forces".[60] Puttick reiterated these points later in the year to the United States military attaché, Colonel John H. Nankivell. It had long been recognised in New Zealand, he added, that if the Dominion maintained large air forces in the Pacific these could more easily be withdrawn home in case of emergency than large land forces.[61]

The absence of real opportunity for substantial employment of our squadrons in the Pacific.

(Daniel Sullivan, May 1944)

Initially there was confusion amongst the New Zealand Joint Staff Mission in Washington when it was discovered that the American Joint Chiefs of Staff intended to leave the RNZAF in a garrison role in the South Pacific Area. Findlay immediately went to see Air Marshal Welsh and Admiral McCain, neither of whom had heard anything about the matter. McCain suggested that there may have been some confusion regarding the withdrawal of 3 Division; the State Department possibly thinking that it was also New Zealand's intention to withdraw the RNZAF, but this turned out not to be the case. After discussions with Nash, it was decided to wait for the Prime Minister who was due to arrive there in a few days en route to England accompanied, according to Findlay, by "the usual plethora of official functions and legation flappings". Fraser met with Admiral King, General Marshall, and Cordell Hull, and made a point of impressing on all three that New Zealand wanted to continue in an active role in the Pacific and also, if possible, to remain under the United States Navy. As a result of these meetings, Fraser was assured that this was possible. Findlay drafted a letter to the Joint Chiefs of Staff saying that it had always

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[60] Minutes of Combined Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 24 April 1944, NARA, R.G. 218 Records of United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Decimal File 1942-1945, Box 172 (Combined Chiefs of Staff Meetings 150-200).

[61] United States Military Attaché to New Zealand monthly liaison letter No. 33, 11 October 1944, NARA R.G. 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Studies, Entry 16, Box 1131, No. 99102.

been the desire of the New Zealand Government to take as active a role in the Pacific as its resources would permit. Nash, however, considered that if this got to the ears of the New Zealand public they would think that the government was recommending the slaughter of brave New Zealand boys, so the letter was withheld.[62]

Isitt was convinced that when Halsey was posted to command the Third Fleet, he would be "anxious to take RNZAF squadrons with him embarked in United States carriers".[63] After conversations with South Pacific Headquarters staff, it appeared that the prospects of the RNZAF continuing in operational employment with Admiral Halsey's forces were reasonably good and this had been recommended to Nimitz by Halsey himself. Group Captain Rowland Spencer, an RAF officer who had previously been Director of Organisation and Staff Duties in Wellington and now attached for special duties in London and Washington, travelled to Hawaii and then to San Francisco where Carney and Halsey were meeting with Admiral King on 6 May to discuss future operations. At this conference, King explained that he was aware that the RNZAF wanted to do other than garrison duty, but he did not want them in the Central Pacific because the New Zealand government might use the fact that their forces had participated in Central Pacific combat operations to insist on a voice in the control of the Mandated Islands. Nimitz confirmed that the RNZAF was not needed in the Central Pacific anyway so it was decided that it must do garrison duty or go to the South-West Pacific.[64]

The next day, Carney informed Spencer that although he could not tell him much about the matters discussed, from the RNZAF point of view the results had not been as satisfactory as had been hoped. He said that because the United States air forces in the Pacific were already larger than could be employed at the present time, it appeared unlikely that RNZAF squadrons would be employed further forward. Spencer then travelled to Washington where he and Findlay discussed the matter with Admiral McCain. Apart from reiterating that he would do all he could to support the

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[62] Findlay to Isitt, 29 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[63] Isitt to Kippenberger, 7 November 1947, NANZ Air 118/81n, appendix IIIk.
[64] Minutes of Pacific Conference (2nd Day) 6 May 1944, Papers of Fleet Admiral King, Series IV, Box 10, p. 22, item 46(c), United States Navy Historical Center, Washington D.C..

claims of the RNZAF, McCain was unaware of the results of the San Francisco meeting and would himself soon be leaving to take up another sea-going command.[65]

On Wednesday 10 May, Findlay and Spencer met with Admiral King who informed them that he had definitely decided that the RNZAF squadrons would not be employed in operations any further north than the Bismarck area in which they were currently operating. King stated frankly that judging from the recently signed Australia-New Zealand Agreement, it appeared to him that the two Dominions were quite happy working together and it was, therefore, natural that the RNZAF should go into the South-West Pacific and operate alongside the RAAF. Furthermore, King told the two New Zealanders that on his own responsibility he had decided that he would not in any circumstances give either New Zealand or Australia any claim to interest themselves in the Japanese Mandated islands, a position he believed might arise later if their forces were employed in operations in the Islands. King made it clear that this decision was made on his own responsibility and had not been dictated by political sources.[66]

King informed Spencer and Findlay that a Marine air wing and a few navy squadrons were to be loaned to General MacArthur for the purpose of neutralising the remaining Japanese held islands in the Bismarck Archipelago area. He felt that these operations might continue for at least three months and quite probably longer. It seemed natural to King that the RNZAF squadrons already operating in the area should continue to do so with this loan force and, if it was the desire of the New Zealand Government and Chiefs of Staff, he would be happy to have a memorandum confirming this as well as obtain the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and issue appropriate instructions to Admiral Halsey. The loan force would be placed under the command of MacArthur who had not yet indicated whether or not he wished to retain the intermediate command of Admiral Fitch's South Pacific Air Command. King was about to withdraw Halsey for another command and his replacement, Vice-Admiral John H. Newton, would not be assuming operational command but would be concerned only with administration and supply. As well as this, it was his intention to restore the line of demarcation between the South Pacific and South-West Pacific

[65] Spencer to Isitt, 11 May 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[66] ibid.

Areas through 159° East and, on conclusion of the mopping up operations, to leave the whole area west of this line under MacArthur.[67]

In his report to the Air Department, Spencer said that he believed Admiral King was quite definite about his decision and there was little possibility of it being revised, especially as King appeared to be the "the strong man so far as the Chiefs of Staff are concerned". The whole position was extremely disappointing, but as far as he could see had been caused by the political repercussions arising from the Canberra Agreement which had met with "very caustic comments in this part of the world". Moreover, wrote Spencer: "there does not appear to be any greater love between the services and politicians here than in certain other countries." As for the New Zealanders, Fraser had already confirmed to King the desire of his government that the RNZAF should continue to be employed to the utmost in operations. Nash, on the other hand, was inclined to hedge on the grounds that the government might be accused of exposing New Zealand forces unnecessarily to the risk of casualties and, according to Spencer, appeared to be convinced that the war was "as good as over".[68]

Daniel Sullivan, the Minister of External Affairs and Acting-Prime Minister during Fraser's absence, cabled Fraser who was then at the Premiers Conference in London, to explain the situation. Isitt had been advised from Washington that following completion of the Bismarcks campaign there was no prospect of active employment for RNZAF squadrons in the Pacific north of the equator. The only role was garrison duties in the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides, which would not absorb even the present strength of the RNZAF. There was also the possibility of an "undefined role" in the South-West Pacific. It was felt that the RNZAF must accept what was offered in the interest of British prestige in the Pacific. Sullivan proposed that Isitt proceed to Washington to discuss the whole matter with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and emphasise that New Zealand would much prefer to continue to be employed with Admiral Halsey, but if this was not possible he would investigate employment in the South-West Pacific on a similar basis to the previous arrangement under Halsey regarding participation of squadrons in operations and control by the New Zealand government. At the same time Isitt could continue on to London where he could

[67] ibid.
[68] ibid.

investigate the possibility of employment in South-East Asia, the idea being that if this did happen, New Zealand's Article XV squadrons should be brigaded with the RNZAF Pacific squadrons transferred there.[69]

Fraser replied that he and Nash had already discussed the future operational employment of the RNZAF in the Pacific with King during his visit to Washington. King had agreed that while New Zealand must undertake its share of garrison duties, it should also have an operational role. At the same time, he cabled Nash: "the decision from Washington is so completely at variance with our understanding with King that I think you should see him immediately and advise me of his views" as soon as possible. Fraser felt that a trip to Washington by Isitt should be postponed at least until Nash had spoken to King.[70]

When Nash returned in mid-May from Philadelphia, where he had been occupied in his capacity as President of the International Labour Organisation conference there, Findlay informed him that Admiral King had told him and Spencer of his intention not to use the RNZAF in an active role. Admiral King's remarks to Findlay were so different from those he had made previously to Fraser and Nash that Nash found them hard to believe. Nash cabled Fraser in London that "whilst King may be living up to his statements when we met him he is certainly not acting in the spirit for long range use of our forces". Nash knew unofficially that Halsey would like to have the New Zealand squadrons to work with him, but he also knew that King was determined that the operations in the Marshalls-Carolines area, where Halsey was to take up his new command, were to be exclusively undertaken by American forces. It would obviously be pointless for the RNZAF to try and make a case for employment elsewhere while King wanted them in the Bismarck Archipelago. As far as Nash could make out, King's views were personal and due to a strong objection to Clause 26 of the Canberra Agreement.[71] Fraser instructed Nash to see King again and impress on him that New Zealand would have no interest in the Japanese Mandated Islands after the war. Nash and Findlay then saw Sir John Dill who expressed surprise that King had adopted this attitude, but intimated that on other occasions the Admiral

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[69] Sullivan to Fraser, 13 May 1944, (forwarded by Fraser to Nash), 16 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2; Isitt to Wilkes, 12 May 1944, NANZ Air 100/11; and Kay, pp. 206-211.
[70] Fraser to Sullivan and Nash, 16 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2.
[71] Nash to Fraser, 17 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 1. See Appendix F of this work.

had not divulged decisions which had been made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and which he, Sir John, should have known about. Nash then met with King who confirmed his decision not to use the RNZAF.[72]

Nash's conversation with King confirmed that while King may have been exceeding his functions in criticising what had been a political agreement between Australia and New Zealand, the New Zealand case was not strong anyway. New Zealand had argued early in the war that it should be included with Australia in strategic planning, and King already had more forces available for his mid-Pacific operations than he could effectively manoeuvre; something he expected to continue, especially if European operations were successfully completed at an early date. Halsey was now required for other assignments and the South Pacific Area would, therefore, be handed over to Newton who would require only minimal forces to protect recaptured British territory in the Solomons and New Hebrides. Nash left with the conclusion that King would not consider using New Zealand forces in the Marshall or Caroline Islands. King promised him that he would discuss the whole question with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but Nash was doubtful that King would do any more than recommend that RNZAF units be seconded to MacArthur for use in South-West Pacific. Clearing up Rabaul and the Bismarck Archipelago was expected to take a few more months and then after that the future was unclear. Nash suggested to Fraser that the only thing New Zealand could do was to wait for more information from King, although he did hope that Fraser would meet with the Admiral again on his next visit to Washington.[73] Sullivan agreed that they could only wait, but felt that New Zealand should consider the South-East Asia alternative if further discussions revealed "the absence of real opportunity for substantial employment of our squadrons in the Pacific".[74]

Fraser thought that the matter was too urgent to wait for his return to Washington so he agreed that Isitt should travel there to get the full facts and then advise the government on the proposed transfer to South-West Pacific. Unfortunately Isitt had already gathered the impression while in Australia that the RAAF were far from satisfied with the roles allotted to them by MacArthur's command and the degree

[72] Findlay to Isitt, 23 May 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[73] Nash to Fraser, 23 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2.

of control they were able to exercise over their own forces. Fraser wanted all these matters clarified before the government gave its decision on the future employment of the air force.[75]

The unhappy position in which we find ourselves.

(Air Commodore James Findlay, May 1944)

As early as March, Wallingford had suggested to Isitt that as there was no longer any Japanese fighter opposition in the Solomons there was little point sending New Zealand fighter squadrons forward. It was decided, however, that for the sake of morale the squadrons would continue to be sent forward even if they could only be employed as fighter-bombers. Once it was announced that the RNZAF was going to be restricted to garrison duties in the South Pacific, it is possible that New Zealand could have reduced its size and released a large number of men into industry and agriculture. Certainly many in New Zealand, and even some Americans, thought this should be done. The official argument, however, was that to do this would have meant, firstly, that the "millions of man-hours and the immense amount of money which had been spent in training and equipping the squadrons would be wasted". Secondly, if New Zealand dropped out of the Pacific war before it was finished "she would have less reason for making her voice heard in the peace councils afterwards". New Zealand would, therefore, continue to press for a more active role for its air force until the end of the war.[76]

To further confuse matters at this time, Isitt received a signal from No. 1 (Islands) Group saying that they had been informed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, through Fitch, that all RNZAF squadrons were to be employed in the rear area, which was Guadalcanal and south, by 15 June. This would involve four fighter squadrons at Guadalcanal, five bomber-reconnaissance squadrons (one at Guadalcanal, one at Espiritu Santo, one at Fiji and two in New Zealand), and one flying-boat squadron at Espiritu Santo. Isitt was concerned that this indicated "the termination of the RNZAF's active role in the Pacific". This would mean a purely garrison role for these squadrons and unemployment for the rest. To make matters worse, the force indicated

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[74] Sullivan to Fraser, 24 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2.
[75] Fraser to Sullivan, 25 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-1.
[76] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 259-260.

by the Joint Chiefs appeared to be vastly in excess of the strength required. The only explanation Isitt could see was that this was possibly a temporary measure. Otherwise it was hard to understand in the light of what he had been told by the Joint Chiefs, and he had had no advice from Washington on this or the major issue of employment for the long term future.[77]

Findlay now wrote to King expressing the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff's "keen disappointment" at his decision. If the Admiral would not reconsider the matter, then New Zealand desired to be included in the proposed force to be lent to South-West Pacific command. Findlay also produced a letter explaining the whole situation for Air Marshal Welsh who would pass it on to the British Chief of Air Staff who would, he hoped, discuss the matter with Churchill. Findlay had no doubt that it was Admiral King alone who was responsible for the "unhappy position in which we find ourselves". Apart from King's political reasons, which he felt were "surely indefensible", Findlay admitted that the Admiral had three strong arguments. Firstly, the United States Navy had "more than ample" aircraft and crews of its own in the Pacific. Secondly, operations in the near future would demand a preponderance of carrier-borne aircraft. And thirdly, the often expressed desire of New Zealand was to be associated with Australia in the prosecution of the war. The first two arguments were well known, although it was hoped that when the islands closer to Japan were taken the landing grounds constructed on them by the Japanese could be used by land-based aircraft. Findlay had already made enquiries about longer range aircraft such as Liberators or Mustangs but it was unlikely that these would be available before 1945 at the earliest. As for the third argument, Nash confirmed that although it was not his desire or the Prime Minister's it was the wish of the majority of the War Cabinet and the Government as a whole to be more closely associated with Australia. It appeared that the best option for the RNZAF was to accept inclusion in the force to be loaned to South-West Pacific and to agitate for return to navy control once mopping up operations were complete which was expected to be about three to four months.[78]

Isitt travelled up to South Pacific Headquarters in Noumea from 23 to 29 May to discuss the whole matter with Halsey and Harmon who informed him that direct

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[77] Isitt to Jones, 22 May 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 1.
[78] Findlay to Isitt, 23 May 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.

association, at least in the near future, would be difficult. Both men supported the idea of RNZAF squadrons moving into the South-West Pacific and were prepared to inform Washington of this, although a decision would be required urgently as orders to withdraw these squadrons by 15 June had already been given. Both were "sympathetic", but said that the decision was now up to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Harmon suggested that Isitt might discuss with General Arnold the idea of attaching the RNZAF to his 13th Air Force with whom they had already worked alongside in the South Pacific. This would avoid dual USAAF and RAAF control and give the New Zealanders a separate identity while still bringing them into the South-West Pacific alongside the RAAF. There would still be other issues of supply and command to be worked out, but Isitt felt sure that MacArthur and Kenney would agree, even though the final decision would rest in Washington.[79]

King informed the other Joint Chiefs of Staff of New Zealand's disappointment and desire to be included in the South-West Pacific force. True to his word, Halsey had recommended that New Zealand fighter and Ventura squadrons could be employed usefully on a temporary basis in the Northern Solomons. Nimitz agreed that this could be useful, but felt that it was undesirable for him or Halsey to initiate any such proposal since this might encourage the demand for employment of New Zealand squadrons in the Central Pacific which was not desired.[80]

MacArthur was consulted and agreed to the transfer of RNZAF squadrons. Representatives of both the New Zealand and Australian governments had approached him and expressed their desire to have the RNZAF under his command, and he was satisfied that it would be a positive step for New Zealand and Australian relations. The matter was then referred to the Joint Staff Planners who decided that it was not desirable for the United States to supply further garrison forces for the South Pacific so the RNZAF would have to retain partial responsibility for these duties. However, New Zealand air forces not required for this should be transferred to South-West Pacific as part of a general redeployment of forces within the South Pacific and South-West Pacific Areas. Initially, the planners suggested that in order to retain flexibility

[79] Isitt to Neville and Secretary War Cabinet, 25 May 1944, Isitt to Shanahan, 24 May 1944, both NANZ EA1 87/4/5-1.

RNZAF squadrons should be transferred to the United States 7th Fleet, but this was not pursued when it was realised that these squadrons would not be returning to any of the Pacific Ocean Areas. Instead it was decided that they would simply be transferred to South-West Pacific and MacArthur could decide what commands to put them in.[81]

On his return from the Pacific, Isitt reported to the War Cabinet that he had had comprehensive discussions with the Americans on the immediate and long-term employment of New Zealand's air force. Everyone in the region had spoken highly of the New Zealanders and told Isitt that they were most anxious for RNZAF squadrons to be actively employed in the forward area and he was, therefore, hoping to hold up the orders to have them withdrawn. Halsey had given his approval for the movement of RNZAF squadrons into the South-West Pacific and even undertaken to ask for the New Zealanders to be placed under his command again if he was ever in a position to employ a shore-based air force. He had been happy for the RNZAF to continue with him to his new command, but his recommendations to King had not been accepted and, unfortunately, there was no immediate prospect of an active role for such an air force under his command. After the conclusion of the current phase of operations, the RNZAF would be required to provide, instead, a garrison force for duty in British possessions in the Pacific, and a tactical force which it was proposed would be attached to the United States 13th Air Force.[82]

The first force would carry out local protection, shipping and anti-submarine reconnaissance and convoy escort in the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand and also the French Territory of New Caledonia. This force would be kept to a minimum, which would be determined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and would come under the operational control of the new South Pacific Commander. The remainder of the RNZAF squadrons would come under the command of Generals

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[80] Joint Chiefs of Staff Paper 884 "Employment of Royal New Zealand Air Force Squadrons" Memo from Admiral King to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 29 May 1944, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 313, File 373.

[81] Joint Chiefs of Staff Paper 884/1 "Employment of Royal New Zealand Air Force Squadrons", 6 June 1944, (and associated papers) NARA R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 313, File 373. The final decision is contained in Joint Chiefs of Staff Paper 713/5 "Redeployment of Forces in the Pacific Following Operation RECKLESS", 14 June 1944, which was amended from saying that all RNZAF squadrons would remain in the South Pacific Area on garrison duty to saying that RNZAF squadrons in excess of garrison requirements would be transferred to the South-West Pacific, NARA R.G. 218, Box 195, File 370 South Pacific Area.

MacArthur and Kenney and the commander of the 13th Air Force, although Isitt expected any questions of policy would be referred back to him. This would involve operations similar to what the RNZAF had been trained and previously used for, as well as allowing them to remain with the same aircraft. These squadrons would be working alongside the RAAF, although not subordinate to them, which the war cabinet at least considered to be a "very desirable result" given the "close relationship which exists between the Commonwealth Government and ourselves".[83]

Isitt explained the situation to his representative at the Victoria Barracks in Melbourne, Group Captain Thomas Wilkes, who had been complaining about being kept in the dark. This was only due to the uncertainty about the RNZAF's future, Isitt assured him, while "we are still fighting for an active role somewhere". Goddard had warned Isitt to stay in the Pacific because if he moved the RNZAF to South-East Asia it would be a considerable time before it would be engaged in operations, and even then only if the New Zealanders could get long-range aircraft. Moreover, indications from Britain were that the RAF had a considerable back-log of pilots and aircrew and future prospects there were limited. Movement to South-West Pacific now appeared to Isitt to be his "one and only chance of keeping the Air Force fighting". If the RNZAF could join the 13th Air Force on the east flank of the area, he confided to Wilkes, the association should be "satisfactory". The RNZAF had worked with them before, and Isitt felt he could work harmoniously with General Kenney, as long as he did not have the RAAF interposed between him and the General.[84] As he explained to Air Vice-Marshal Adrian Cole, of 22 Group RAAF: "I have managed to keep our people in the battle, at least until the end of the Bismarck Archipelago phase". Beyond that, the position was still obscure, however, he told the Australian, "if I have my way, we may be on your right flank".[85]

At the beginning of June, Halsey made a two-day trip to New Zealand where he was made a Knight of the British Empire (KBE) which especially pleased his staff. Isitt wrote to Cole that Halsey was "a great fellow and I would accept him as my

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[82] Report to War Cabinet on visit to Headquarters COMSOPAC and COMAIRSOPAC 23 to 29 May 1944; also Sullivan to Fraser, 7 June 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 1.
[83] ibid.
[84] Isitt to Group Captain T. M. Wilkes, RNZAF Liaison Officer, Melbourne, 31 May 1944, NANZ Air 100/11.
[85] Isitt to Air Vice-Marshal Adrian T. Cole, 22 Group RAAF Darwin, 3 June 1944, NANZ Air 100/11.

leader anywhere and at any time".[86] He also finally admitted to Halsey that although he had not been very keen to take the RNZAF to South-West Pacific, his enquiries now indicated that there would be no possibility of staying with him in the Pacific. The South-East Asia theatre was developing very slowly and it looked as though the New Zealanders would not get into any war there for at least twelve months, so the only prospect of keeping his air force fighting was to go to South-West Pacific. If this was the case, Isitt was prepared to go, and planned to attach that portion of the RNZAF not required for garrison duty in the Solomons and New Hebrides to the 13th Air Force which would soon come under the command of General Kenney. Isitt intended to proceed to Washington with the 13th Air Force's current commander, General Harmon, to place this proposal before General Arnold and request him to support it with the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. "I will", he told Halsey, "discuss the whole problem with Admiral Fitch as soon as I reach Washington, and will certainly swing back to our Naval allegiance if he offers me any hope." Isitt hoped that Halsey would also support this plan and if the opportunity did ever arise for him to employ the RNZAF in the future then he would request their transfer to his command as he had promised during their last meeting in Noumea.[87]

Goddard also wrote to Halsey from India to congratulate him on being made a Knight of the British Empire. Not that he thought Halsey wanted to be considered as such, but at least it showed that the Empire recognised what "tremendous work" he had done during the war. At the same time, Goddard took the opportunity to mention his old air force. "It is no longer, alas, any of my business to have opinions about what part the RNZAF should now try to take in helping to beat the Japanese", he told Halsey. However, he continued, "I do hope that they will continue to serve under Admiral Nimitz' Flag in the Pacific and that although they must do a good deal of rear defence I hope that a place will also be found for them near the front." Duty had taken Goddard to South-East Asia Command, but he told Halsey, he would "greatly prefer to be serving still under United States Navy Command", something perhaps his current commander might have been interested to know. As long as the Americans were not too quick in getting to Tokyo, he even hoped he might have a chance to get

[86] ibid.
[87] Isitt to Lieutenant W. J. Kitchell, A.D.C. to Admiral Halsey, 1 June 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

back to the Pacific. Although Halsey replied that it had been with regret that he had taken leave of the New Zealanders, and he hoped his and Goddard's paths would cross again, he made no comment on the RNZAF's future which was now obviously beyond his influence.[88]

"I am quite relieved that it is not my responsibility, now, to advise you on the matter," Goddard assured Fraser. If it was, Goddard felt that he would want to "forge ahead" as far as possible in the Pacific although he had little doubt that the Air Ministry would be glad to have New Zealand squadrons in Asia. "Naturally, we should be delighted to have squadrons from New Zealand here", he told Fraser, but my personal feeling is that they should continue to fight in the Pacific".[89]

We feel the Americans are sympathetic to our views and consider it most important that at least some proportion of each type of our force be actively employed.
(Air Commodore Arthur Nevill, July 1944)

On 15 June, General MacArthur assumed control of the Northern Solomons and forces in that area with the object of neutralising Bougainville and the Bismarck Archipelago. Isitt informed Fraser from Washington that the RNZAF would now be operating as part of the force loaned to MacArthur which would be employed until the conclusion of hostilities in that area. The American South Pacific command had already asked for four fighter squadrons, two bomber-reconnaissance squadrons and a flying-boat squadron for garrison duty in the South Pacific and Isitt estimated that he would be able to make the same available again for transfer to the South-West Pacific Area. Even at this stage, Isitt still held out hopes that the New Zealanders transferred to South-West Pacific might be found an active role under Halsey once these operations were completed, but it was more likely, he admitted, that they would continue to be attached to the 13th Air Force. Isitt also discussed the matter at some length with the British Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, and the Vice-Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, who were both convinced that the RNZAF was best employed in the Pacific rather than in the alternative theatres of Europe or South-East Asia. Continued employment in the Pacific would

[88] Goddard to Halsey, 21 June 1944; Halsey to Goddard, 4 July 1944, United States Library of Congress Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection Box 3.
[89] Goddard to Fraser, 21 June 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-1.

result in higher efficiency and morale and would place the RNZAF "in or near the area in which it would be desired to re-deploy them with the British Commonwealth Force".[90]

Plans for an empire force to be used in the Pacific were still tentative and still had to be discussed with the other dominions before being submitted to the British Chiefs of Staff and then finally to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. It was provisionally hoped, however, that New Zealand would be able to supply a large contingent of five to seven fighter squadrons, four light or medium bomber squadrons, two heavy bomber squadrons, two flying-boat squadrons and a transport squadron. The force would probably be formed about four or five months after the defeat of Germany, but it was unlikely that New Zealand's contribution would be required for re-deployment for at least nine to twelve months. In the meantime, Isitt had already informed Fitch that the transfer of RNZAF squadrons to the South-West Pacific would be considered by New Zealand as "an interim employment" and that he "would wish to conform to any future re-deployment of British forces approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff".[91]

King was already aware that Britain had expressed a desire to use both Australian and New Zealand forces for Far East operations, especially in the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya and Borneo. He knew too that the Australian Prime Minister and the Commander in Chief of Australian Land Forces, General Sir Thomas Blamey, had recently been in Washington and Blamey's attitude had indicated to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that he wished to divorce Australian and New Zealand forces in the Pacific from MacArthur.[92] Isitt was well aware that British plans were only "nebulous" at this stage, but his main concern was their scheduled timing. If British air forces could not be established in Australia until five months after the end of the European war, and an army not until six or seven months after that, they might be better established further north in Sumatra or even the Andaman Islands with a view to campaigns on the Malay Peninsula. It seemed reasonable to suppose that by

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[90] Memorandums for Prime Minister from Chief of Air Staff, "Intermediate Employment of RNZAF Squadrons in the Pacific", and "Future Employment of RNZAF Pacific Squadrons", 7 July 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 1.

[91] ibid.

[92] Minutes of Pacific Conference 13 July 1944, Papers of Fleet Admiral King, Series IV, Box 10, p. 21, item 36, United States Navy Historical Center.

late 1945 the Americans would have established bases in the Philippines, a beach-head in China or Indo-China, and possibly even landed in Formosa in which case Australia would be too far back. Isitt was pleased that British planners had advised him to stay in the Pacific in the meantime, but was anxious to find out as soon as possible what other support organisation he would be required to supply for the proposed force. He had also been unable to obtain any information on the system of higher command. Was the force, for example, to come under MacArthur's command or general direction or was it to be organised as a British force with its own commander, or would the army, navy and air units of it work alongside their American counterparts?[93]

Long-term policy had to ensure that the RNZAF in the Pacific zone was maintained at its agreed strength and in a state of readiness rather than allow it to be permanently allocated to a garrison role which could compromise its future employment. In other words it had to be "fully operational in terms of training and combat experience" to have a chance of continued active service against Japan. This was becoming steadily more difficult as effective Japanese land-based power in the South Pacific was eliminated and United States naval forces made continual gains at sea. The necessity to hold large defence forces in New Zealand was also practically gone and these would have to be drastically reduced. However, it was the government's wish that the RNZAF be used "to the fullest extent in the combat zone", especially as it looked probable that it could soon be the only service representing the dominion in an active theatre of operations in the Pacific.[94]

At this stage of the war, New Zealand had 17 squadrons in the Pacific consisting of:

	Base (N.Z.)	SOPAC (Support)	NORSOLS (Combat)
Fighter	4	2	3
Bomber-Reconnaissance	2	2	1
Torpedo-Bomber	-	-	1
Flying-Boat	-	1	-
Transport	1	-	-

[93] Isitt to Wilkes, 2 August 1944, NANZ Air 100/11.
[94] Appreciation of Employment of RNZAF in Pacific Ocean Area, 8 July 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 part 1.

Another fighter squadron and another flying-boat squadron were due to be formed within the next few months and the last torpedo-bomber squadron was due to be disbanded at the end of July.[95] Although the Americans requested that this squadron and three others of its type be retained, because all of theirs were fully occupied in the Central Pacific, they were informed that this could not be done without "seriously prejudicing" New Zealand's fighter programme. South Pacific Air Command had also requested that all five of New Zealand's bomber-reconnaissance squadrons be located in the garrison area, but again it was pointed out that New Zealand could probably provide three Ventura squadrons but would be most reluctant to make more than two available so that another two could be left available for more active service. Once again, the concern was the effect on morale if any type of squadron was relegated to a less active role. "We feel the Americans are sympathetic to our views", Nevill wrote to his chief, "and consider it most important that at least some proportion of each type of our force be actively employed". The hope was to have a force that could be permanently available for active operations in any Pacific theatre.[96]

New Zealand's Ventura squadrons currently spent three months in support, three months in combat and six months in New Zealand, while fighter squadrons spent three weeks in support, six weeks in combat and six to nine weeks at home. It was aimed through this rotation of squadrons to allow all aircrew an opportunity of a tour of operations in the combat zone and this had a marked effect on the health, efficiency and morale of both air and ground crews. The relegation of any of these squadron types to a purely garrison role, with no prospects of more active service, would have serious repercussions. Early RNZAF squadrons to go into the Pacific had been complete with servicing staff, but in June 1943 they were reorganised and Servicing Units created which were separate from, and served longer tours in the Islands than, the actual squadrons.[97]

Fitch had recommended a total of 15 squadrons for garrison duty in the South Pacific Area of which half would be American squadrons, but it was likely that it would be these American squadrons that would be withdrawn as the Japanese threat

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[95] ibid.
[96] Nevill to Isitt, 6 July 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 1.
[97] Appreciation of Employment of RNZAF in Pacific Ocean Area.

became less and less, leaving eventually only the New Zealanders. If this did happen, and if the New Zealand defence force was reduced, it was hoped by New Zealand Air Staff to produce a balanced force of squadrons distributed as follows:

	N.Z.	Garrison	Combat
Fighter	2	4	4
Bomber-Reconnaissance	1	2	2
Flying-Boat	-	1	1

This would depend on the continuation of the planned expansion of the RNZAF, and would probably be available by the end of 1944.[98]

Finally, on 8 July, Nash informed the New Zealand government that he had had "a very satisfactory interview" with Admiral King and that Isitt had also spoken to Admiral Fitch and General Arnold. The Joint Chiefs of Staff now agreed that New Zealand should provide a minimum garrison force for duty in the South Pacific Area and that those squadrons not required for this be given operational employment in the South-West Pacific. Fitch helpfully suggested that the term "garrison" be amended and both forces be called "tactical".[99] The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff agreed that this course of action was the best available "to ensure the continued participation of RNZAF units in active operations in the Pacific". The amount of air defence needed by New Zealand, primarily to protect Auckland and Wellington, had been fixed by the chiefs in March 1943 at two fighter squadrons and two medium bomber-reconnaissance squadrons, but it was now felt that with the improved situation and decreased threat to the country, this could be reduced to release another bomber-reconnaissance squadron for active service. It was also felt that if there was a threat to the New Zealand, there would be other squadrons already in the country training or on leave and these could be quickly supplemented from the Pacific if necessary.[100]

A conference was held in Noumea on 2 August 1944, attended by Isitt and representatives of Halsey and MacArthur to discuss the transfer of RNZAF squadrons

[98] ibid.
[99] Nash to Minister of External Affairs, 8 July 1944, and New Zealand Air Mission Washington to Air Department Wellington, 8 July 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 1.
[100] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper Number 195, Future Employment of RNZAF Operational Squadrons in the Pacific, 13 July 1944, NANZ Air 1 105/3/6.

surplus to South Pacific garrison requirement to South-West Pacific. The conference served the purpose of clarifying the general organisation for the deployment, operation and maintenance of RNZAF squadrons already in South Pacific Area and the movement of additional squadrons forward into South-West Pacific. The immediate result of this was that New Zealand would maintain two fighter squadrons at Espiritu Santo, and two at Guadalcanal, one bomber-reconnaissance squadron at Guadalcanal and one in Fiji, and one flying-boat squadron at Halavo Bay. This would fulfil South Pacific garrison requirements and leave two fighter squadrons and one bomber-reconnaissance squadron (all currently on Bougainville) for transfer to the South-West Pacific. The American commanders agreed that while the RNZAF remained operating in the Bismarck-Solomons axis, including Emirau, it could continue to rely on South Pacific Air Command to provide logistic support for its navy type aircraft.[101]

As well as the fighter and bomber-reconnaissance squadrons now available on Bougainville, New Zealand had undertaken at the conference to provide another bomber-reconnaissance squadron which would be ready in New Zealand by 17 September and two more fighter squadrons by 1 October. The employment of these last squadrons would depend upon what shipping Halsey's headquarters could make available from New Zealand to the combat areas. If and when they operated from points elsewhere than the Solomons-Bismarck axis, Halsey told Nimitz, logistic support would depend on the commander of South-West Pacific. He was leaving the other details of organisation and administration for Isitt and MacArthur to arrange directly. Isitt later informed Halsey that he could provide even more than this if it was required, as long as he had plenty of advance notice.[102]

Isitt then travelled with his Director of Operations, Wing Commander Gordon Pirie, to Brisbane for further talks with Kenney and other staff officers at South-West Pacific Headquarters. Kenney told the New Zealanders that he intended to employ the RNZAF squadrons in the Northern Solomons area. While he realised that this might not be the most active form of employment, it fitted in with the general South-West

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[101] Deployment of RNZAF Squadrons in South-West Pacific Areas, 8 August 1944, NANZ Air 1 130/30/1; Mitchell to Isitt, 22 August 1944, NARA R.G. 313, Entry 241, Box 2715, File A-1.
[102] Halsey to Nimitz, 2 August 1944, Nimitz Command Summary, Book Five, pp. 2336-2337; Isitt to Halsey, 25 October 1944, NARA R.G. 313, Entry 241, Box 2715, File A-1.

Pacific plan and would simplify the problem of the RNZAF having navy aircraft in this army area. Kenney also indicated that the existing American air command of the Northern Solomons would soon be withdrawn and requested that the New Zealand squadrons be formed into a task force with the aim of taking over full operational command of the area. Formation of these units into a task force would also considerably facilitate their eventual transfer to the Southern Philippines and the Halmahera Islands from which operations would be conducted against the Japanese bases in Sarawak and Borneo.[103]

Details of logistics and support, and channels of communication would still have to be finalised. However, Kenney's Chief of Staff, General Bebbe, stressed the desirability of establishing RNZAF units into a task force organisation as soon as possible and directed that RNZAF squadrons should be ready to move, as soon as they became available, to positions on Bougainville, Green Island, Emirau, and Manus. The two staffs also discussed the re-equipment of the RNZAF with army-type aircraft. The Americans argued that New Zealand's continued use of navy types would "seriously hamper" the more active participation of New Zealand units closer to the front line. Bebbe believed that New Zealand should press for P-51 Mustang fighters to replace their Corsairs and something like the B-25 Mitchell twin-engine bomber instead of the Venturas. He felt sure that MacArthur would support any bid put forward by the RNZAF to the Munitions Assignment Board. Once again, however, this would present huge problems for such a small air force in trying to maintain and crew such a diverse range of aircraft.[104]

Isitt informed the War Cabinet that the conversations had been "most satisfactory" and Kenney and his staff fully appreciated the New Zealand Government's desire for the RNZAF to be employed in an active role and had "indicated their willingness to comply with this desire". Isitt told the government that while it was impossible to state a definite timetable, it appeared likely that the air force would be allocated roles in three phases. The first would be deployment in the Bismarck area and a continuation of the present operations in the Bougainville area. The RNZAF would remain attached to the commander of the Northern Solomons

[103] Wing Commander Gordon H. M. Pirie, Director of Operations, "Deployment of RNZAF Squadrons in South-West Pacific Areas", 8 August 1944, NANZ Air 1 130/30/1.

Force, but would eventually take full control of these operations. At the end of this phase, the task force would transfer to Halmahera where it would be attached to the 13th Air Force for operations against the Philippines and shipping in this area. Finally would be "operations within the Philippines and beyond, either with the 13th or 5th Air Force". Interestingly, Isitt also noted that he had been advised by RAF Command that these proposed deployments fitted in well with longer term British proposals and would "not affect our ultimate ability to join with any British forces eventually deployed in the Pacific area".[105]

After King's insistence that the RNZAF would not be going further north, Isitt's confidence is difficult to account for. In his report of the same conference, Pirie noted instead that Kenney's headquarters wanted RNZAF units in the Northern Solomons to be organised into a task force because this would "considerably facilitate the eventual transfer of these units to strips in the Southern Philippines and Halmahera Islands, from which operations against the Japanese in bases in Sarawak and Borneo would be conducted".[106] Given King's reluctance to have Australian and New Zealand units in the Japanese mandated islands, it seems more likely that he would allow them to be used in operations in previously British areas than in the Philippines. Furthermore, it is doubtful that Kenney, or even MacArthur, could allot an operational role to the New Zealanders without King's approval and there was no reason to suggest that the Admiral had changed his mind. Yet Isitt still told No. 1 (Islands) Group that on completion of the Bismarck operations a RNZAF task force would be moving forward to join the 15th Air Force in Halmahera or the Philippines and then go forward with them or the 5th Air Force. Furthermore it was on this assumption that the New Zealand war cabinet decided to adhere to the 19 squadron RNZAF plan.[107]

After the war, Isitt recalled that it was MacArthur who had explained his plans for the attack on the Philippines in which the New Zealand bomber squadrons would be based in northern Borneo and be given responsibility for shipping reconnaissance

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[104] ibid.

[105] Isitt to Jones, 5 August 1944, NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 11-12 and appendix IIIg. See also Isitt liaison letter 10 August 1944, NANZ EA1 84/3/22.

[106] Pirie to Isitt, 8 August 1944, NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, p. 12 and appendix IIIh, (see reference 94 above).

and anti-shipping work in the South China and Sulu Seas. New Zealand fighter squadrons were to go into the central and northern Philippines with the United States 5th Air Force. Isitt believed, however, that operations against the Japanese in the Philippines had gone so well that apart from withdrawing further American fighter squadrons from the Bougainville area and leaving the RNZAF "holding the bag there" MacArthur and Halsey had not needed the extra support. From then on, Isitt believed:

> the situation was never held up sufficiently long for full deployment of the air strength which was available until the occupation of Okinawa, and by this time the air strength was such that there was no need to call on us or on the United States Marine squadrons which were still on Bougainville.

When Isitt later went to Luzon, Kenney assured him that the RNZAF should continue its operations in the Northern Solomons, and would later move forward. Even after the war, Isitt remained convinced that New Zealand squadrons were to have been used "at a later date against forward areas and the mainland of Japan". When he met General MacArthur on the USS *Missouri* on 2 September 1945, MacArthur's first words were "well Isitt, we are here very much sooner than I expected to be when I talked to you in Brisbane. It was unfortunate for your fellows that the war took the turn it did, but I am sure they are all satisfied with the result." The official history narrator suggests that it is "not beyond the realms of possibility" that the American commanders, especially MacArthur, were prepared to say one thing and yet be determined to do another. The important point was that, whatever the reason, the RNZAF did not go forward to the Philippines.[108]

After further conversations with Kenney, Isitt informed RNZAF representatives in Washington of the changes proposed for 1945. Findlay, however, informed Isitt from Washington that some of these might not be advantageous or even possible, especially the proposed change to army-type aircraft. After discussing 1945 aircraft allocations with General Jamieson, Findlay told Isitt that production of army types would only be sufficient to meet American requirements and there was no prospect of any allocations for the RNZAF at this stage. In fact, as there were already

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[107] Isitt to No. 1 (Islands) Group, 15 August 1944, New Zealand War Cabinet decision, 15 August 1944, both cited in NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 13-14.
[108] Isitt to Kippenberger, 7 November 1947, NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 15-17.

United States Navy (Marine) Air units operating under Kenney's command, Jameison had been at a loss as to why Kenney should have recommended such a move, especially as the production situation was fully known to him. Another potential embarrassment would also be caused by the return of all serviceable Corsairs and Venturas, together with spares and equipment, as no procedure had yet been established between the New Zealand and American governments for the return of lend lease material.[109] Consequently, Isitt informed Kenney that if logistic support could be arranged the RNZAF would prefer to remain equipped with navy aircraft. If the New Zealanders were to change types Isitt was anxious that it should be a complete changeover involving all forward squadrons, including those remaining in the South Pacific, as well as reserve and training units. This would require 491 Fighters and 150 medium bombers, a seemingly unobtainable amount for 1945, as well as a possibly protracted non-effective period while the RNZAF was being re-equipped. "As you know", he reminded Kenney, "our overriding desire is eventually to get our squadrons forward into the battle."[110]

Unfortunately, Isitt knew it was "this or nothing". At the moment there was a job to be done in the Bismarck Archipelago, and insufficient strips on New Guinea to accommodate New Zealand squadrons, so the RNZAF would not be moving forward immediately. After the Bismarck operations, the New Zealand task force hoped to move forward to join the United States 15th Air Force in Halmahera or the Philippines before going forward with either them or the 5th Air Force.[111] As McIntosh reminded the Australian High Commissioner, New Zealand was anxious to take part in operations "both in order to maintain the morale of our squadrons and for political reasons."[112]

Group Captain Geoffrey Roberts, who was currently serving with the staff of the Northern Solomons Air Command, visited RAAF Northern Command Headquarters at Madang to cement relations between 1 Australian Army, RAAF Northern Command, and the New Zealand Task Force, the three authorities soon to be responsible for the area. The Americans, Roberts believed, were, perhaps

[109] Findlay to Isitt, 11 August 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.
[110] Isitt to Kenney, 31 August 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.
[111] Isitt to Wallingford, 15 August 1944, NANZ Air 1 130/30/1.
[112] McIntosh to D'Alton, 11 August 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-1.

unconsciously, reviving "the Spirit of ANZAC" in the Northern Solomons-Bismarck area. How much responsibility the two countries were willing to accept was another matter, he told Isitt, "but to my mind it is perfectly evident that we can have the lot if we want it and will take it".[113]

New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff now faced another potentially much more serious problem. A number of articles were beginning to appear in the New Zealand press criticising the air force for being top-heavy, over-manned and unnecessary. Senior officers were accused of empire building and maintaining an over-sized force merely to justify their high rank and position. Some later writers have admitted that due to inexperience and a lack of planning for expansion, there was some inefficiency, over-manning, and a lack of frankness about the situation, but still feel that the RNZAF's reputation suffered unnecessarily at the hands of the press.[114] At the time, the Chiefs felt that many of these articles were "nearly if not definitely subversive", especially some appearing in the *New Zealand Herald* which had been "particularly offensive" and constituted "obvious breaches of the Security Regulations". Such publicity would have a "serious effect on morale and discipline throughout the service", particularly at a time when it was completing its expansion programme for a greater commitment in the Pacific. The maintenance of the air force at its present level was already becoming difficult because of the duration of the war, the need to relieve operationally-expired personnel, national manpower requirements and a growing public apathy.[115]

Part of the problem, the Chiefs felt was that New Zealand's press were "lamentably misinformed" on the role and activities of the air force, probably caused by the fact that less information was released in New Zealand than in many other Allied countries. What was needed was not only a satisfactory manning policy approved by the government, but that the general public should support the air force and have a reasonable appreciation of its role and activities. This could only be done by increasing publicity, especially the release of more information which was currently tightly restricted by security regulations. It was now considered, at least by

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[113] Report of Tour by Group Captain G. Roberts, October 1944, NANZ Air 1 130/30/1.
[114] For example, Geoffrey Bentley, *RNZAF: A Short History*, Wellington, Reed, 1969, pp. 139-140.
[115] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper No. 196, Service Publicity, 15 August, 1944, NANZ Air 1 105/3/6.

the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, that conditions in the Pacific had sufficiently changed so that these regulations could be lifted and steps taken to inform the press better on the role of policies and problems of the RNZAF. This would also prevent much of the harm being done by the publication of "rumour and information picked up by the press from disgruntled and irresponsible personnel, both within and without the Service". Isitt, Puttick and Lake now pressed the government to adopt similar policies to the United Kingdom where regular press conferences were held by the Chiefs of Staff and additional material was given to editors in the form of confidential guides which, although they could not be published, would "assist editors in dealing sympathetically and helpfully with problems affecting the Services".[116]

The Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand, Thomas D'Alton, also hinted at the problem when discussing the New Zealand situation with Dr. Evatt. "The considerations of defence and security", he warned Evatt,

> may well weigh less and less in the public mind as the Pacific war recedes northwards. Such a development has already commenced here. New Zealand was never so closely threatened as was Australia and the Japanese victories did not bring home to the people of this country the same kind of isolation in the Pacific. Interest in the war is still, in New Zealand, focused on events in Europe and the Pacific fighting receives little prominence. Considerations of security, therefore, which favoured the tightening of the bonds between our two countries early this year are likely to be given less weight as the war proceeds.[117]

D'Alton informed Evatt that while the New Zealanders should definitely be approached about the possibility of closer economic, industrial and trade ties - "a trade agreement approaching as near as possible a customs union" - there were several factors to be kept in mind. "Firstly", he told Evatt, "there is New Zealand's fear of being swamped by the Commonwealth [of Australia] and of losing her national identity". This feeling, D'Alton believed, stemmed mostly from the fear that closer relations would enable Australia's recent industrial development to undersell the even more recently established manufacturing industries in New Zealand. Secondly, there was New Zealand's prevailing sentiment of attachment to the United Kingdom.

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[116] ibid.

[117] D'Alton to Evatt, 28 July 1944, Australian Archives A989 1943/735/167 "Australian - New Zealand Relations".

Britain was still New Zealand's best customer and supplier, and still regarded as home. The best thing Australia could do was emphasise the shared security concerns of the two countries and "the sympathy and common interests existing between the members of the Labour Governments of our two lands".[118]

On 19 August, Isitt informed Admiral Carney that he had been under considerable pressure lately. As the war moved further away from New Zealand shores, he was finding that the country's motivation to fight was receding somewhat. On top of this, the RNZAF had become the subject of considerable public and press criticism "on account of its size in view of the fact that it is, at present, doing so little fighting". Isitt told Carney about his conference with Kenney in Brisbane where it was agreed that approximately half of the RNZAF's strength would be made available to the South-West Pacific Area. He was prepared to organise the forward South-West Pacific elements as a task force to continue operating in the Bismarck area in the meantime. But as soon as this area was cleared, Isitt hoped his air force could move forward. The move forward was not as rapid as he would have liked but, he confided to Carney, "one is lucky these days to stay in the active picture".[119]

Carney was now with the United States Third Fleet and replied that they were busy in the Philippines "delivering crippling blows from which the Japanese will be a long time recovering - if ever". He was watching with interest for evidence of RNZAF squadrons moving forward, but was afraid they had reversed the tables on the shore-based air forces this time. The 13th Air Force, he told Isitt, had done such a good job on Palau that there were not many targets left for the navy air forces to work on. By the time the navy flyers had finished with the Japanese air forces in the Philippines, Carney was afraid that there might not be much air opposition left for South-West Pacific air forces to engage. Carney said they were scoring almost fantastic damage against Japanese forces in the Philippines in what he believed had been "the greatest three months in all Naval History". The Americans were accomplishing their aim of attacking unceasingly and forcing the Japanese to retaliate and precipitate a showdown. Carney had lots of old South Pacific personnel there and the only thing missing was "that grand New Zealand air outfit" which he believed

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[118] ibid.

[119] Isitt to Carney, 19 August 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

"should be in the Philippines right now doing their stuff". He felt that the war in the Philippines area was almost a duplicate of the South Pacific campaign, and the experience of forces from that area had been invaluable.[120]

There is always the over-riding political viewpoint to which I am very close and which it is my job to lead.

(Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt, October 1944)

After discussions with Air Marshal Welsh, Findlay informed Isitt that at the recently held Quebec Conference there had been considerable opposition "from certain quarters" to either the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force participating in the Pacific war at all. The Americans, especially King, had been unenthusiastic, but Churchill had insisted. It was eventually agreed that Britain would provide 20 Lancaster bomber squadrons as long range bombers and another 20 as "air refuellers" to be used for bombing if required. These squadrons would initially operate from Australia or New Guinea. There had been no mention at all of the RNZAF, although it had been tentatively agreed that a considerable British naval force would also be made available in the same area and Findlay speculated that RNZAF squadrons might be of assistance to this. In the meantime the United States Chiefs of Staff had suggested that in view of the position of the war in Europe the review of aircraft allocations for 1945 should be postponed until November. The British staff were happy with this, but Findlay had requested that New Zealand allocations be determined as soon as possible so that the RNZAF could make plans and commitments for the next year. He also wanted to avoid a repetition of the 1944 allocations which had not been finally approved until February of that year.[121]

During the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in London in May, tentative proposals had been discussed concerning the employment of RNZAF squadrons in a possible British Commonwealth Task Force for operations in the South-West Pacific Area. An estimate of the forces required from Britain had actually been drawn up by the British Chiefs of Staff after these discussions. As a result of decisions taken by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Quebec, however, it was now evident that no such Commonwealth Task Force was likely to be formed in South-

[120] Carney to Isitt, 16 September 1944 and 2 December 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.
[121] Findlay to Isitt, 21 and 28 September 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.

West Pacific for the foreseeable future. The RNZAF would therefore have to continue to develop, operate and be equipped under the American commanders in the South and South-West Pacific Areas. Britain presumed that after the end of the German war, the New Zealand Government would wish to have New Zealanders at present integrated into the RAF and Article XV squadrons returned for service in those theatres. Arrangements would therefore be made by Britain for this to happen as soon as operational contingencies and transportation would allow. The New Zealand Government had already agreed to contribute one squadron as part of the occupation forces for Europe after the war, and the British Air Staff made it clear that they would also welcome another two squadrons for the South-East Asian theatre.[122] Isitt agreed that the RNZAF would probably absorb in the Pacific as many personnel as could be employed, but was aware that this would only be a limited number and the majority would have to be demobilised and rehabilitated on return to New Zealand. As a result, he suggested that any aircrew who wished to do so should be allowed to volunteer for continued service with the RAF. Isitt was also keen to provide aircrew for two squadrons for service in South-East Asia, but Pacific commitments would make it impossible for him to supply ground crew for them.[123]

New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff remained aware of the need for extensive defence co-operation with Britain, both now and after the war. The strategic mobility of the Empire's air forces in the South Pacific, they informed the government, would depend on the provision of adequately equipped bases in the area. The time factor in any future war would also be such as to provide powerful reasons for maintaining uniform aircraft types and personnel training within the Empire virtually to the degree of constituting an "Imperial Air Force". The chiefs foresaw the role of the post-war RNZAF as being much the same as at present. This would be a small regular air force around which reserves could be created and expansion carried out during a time of war. New Zealand would maintain a few squadrons and a small transport organisation for the immediate defence of the South Pacific and for training, as well as being prepared to maintain a bomber-reconnaissance squadron in Fiji, and co-operate with

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[122] RNZAF Headquarters London to Air Department Wellington, 7 October 1944, and Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to New Zealand Minister of External Affairs (No. 231), 19 October 1944, both NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

[123] Isitt to Jones, 10 October 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

Australia and Britain in maintaining a base in the New Hebrides. Moreover, the growth of international aviation throughout the Pacific would inevitably bring about increased defence responsibilities and New Zealand should prepare to play a role in this.[124]

At this stage, the defence chiefs saw the only threat to the security of the Pacific as coming from "some first-class Asiatic power". Following the Cairo Conference, the Allies had declared that Japan would be stripped of all the islands it had seized since 1914. New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff Committee, therefore, took it for granted that after the war these islands would be under the control of, or at least defended by, the United States or some other friendly power. The growth of air power, however, had introduced the principle that the best defence of a country was secured by the maintenance of a defended zone well in advance of the home territory so the chiefs once again emphasised the need for Australia and New Zealand to base their defence on the island screen to the north. The defence of Australia and New Zealand, they argued, was a single problem which could only be adequately determined by a joint defence staff. In the past, military liaison between the two countries had been "relatively unsatisfactory" and the chiefs recommended close and continuous association in defence planning. The Australian Defence Committee had reiterated in January that New Zealand should take responsibility for the defence of Fiji and to this the New Zealand committee added as vital to the defence of the dominion, New Caledonia and Tonga. In addition, they stressed that New Zealand had a "powerful military interest" in the New Hebrides, Norfolk Island and Western Samoa; where New Zealand had obligations, "if only for reasons of prestige", because of its proximity to the American base at Tutuila. [125]

Once again, Isitt wrote to Kenney to try to arrange another meeting for discussing possible future roles for the RNZAF. He had just been as far forward as Bougainville where everything was "moving smoothly", but now hoped to discuss the problem of employing the New Zealand air force forward of the Bismarck axis, especially as the air strength required for the South Pacific Area continued to be reduced. While Isitt understood that the matter was still obscure and probably

[124] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper No. 200, Security in Relation to South Pacific General Security Problem, 12 October 1944, NANZ Air 1 105/3/6.

depended on Japanese action and, especially, on where they decided to make a stand, he hoped that some agreement could be reached. "I definitely see your difficulty and the impossibility of employing additional squadrons in the forward area until we can get on a broader front", he explained to Kenney. Yet there were various matters hinging on New Zealand's future employment, in particular future aircraft and personnel requirements, and there was always "the over-riding political viewpoint to which I am very close and which it is my job to lead, if I can, along the lines which we consider the best in the interests of the war."[126]

Goddard continued to reassure Isitt that although it was inevitable that the RNZAF could not, for the time being, hold a place in the forefront of the battle, it did seem that the New Zealanders had "a good prospect of getting back there again before long". He congratulated Isitt on the new organisation he had "contrived" with the Americans and the structural changes he had made within the air force. Speaking from experience, he was sure Isitt had had "an anxious and difficult time" with the government. Yet Goddard was satisfied that he had done the right thing in stressing the need for the RNZAF to make and maintain a proper place for itself in the Pacific.[127] However, Berendsen had been talking to Barrowclough and stressed to McIntosh that if New Zealand was going to insist on a voice in the Pacific settlement, then that right still had to be earned in American eyes and this could only be done by taking "a substantial part" in the Pacific War. "As I see it", Berendsen said, "our Air Force effort will not be enough to earn us that right; we must have land forces on the job, though as Barrowclough sees it, and I agree, we need not, in view of our heavy casualties ... take a shock troop role."[128]

By November, Isitt was concerned that the picture of the RNZAF's future in the Pacific was "more obscure than ever".[129] Halsey had dealt a heavy blow against the Japanese in the Philippines and Formosa, and American landings in Leyte indicated a considerable speeding-up of the movement forward. The RNZAF was still based in the South Pacific, as well as having six squadrons in the South-West Pacific Area based on Bougainville, Green Island and Emirau. During this last phase of the

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[125] ibid.
[126] Isitt to Kenney, 16 October 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.
[127] Goddard to Isitt, 6 October 1944, NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3.
[128] Berendsen to McIntosh, 9 November 1944, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, pp. 83-84.

war, the RNZAF continued to grow with more fighter squadrons followed by bomber-reconnaissance, flying boats, additional servicing units and another transport squadron. A New Zealand Air Task Force was formed on Bougainville in September 1944 to exercise operational control of the RNZAF units operating under the Northern Solomons Air Force Command alongside the First Marine Air Wing. The intention had been to transfer the remaining Marine Air Wing to the Philippines during October and transfer all control in the area to the RNZAF. Field Headquarters were set up at all locations where the RNZAF was based ready for the takeover, but the Americans would eventually remain in command of the area until July 1945 leaving the RNZAF in total command of its units in the forward area only for the last few weeks of the Pacific war.[130]

An Australian Army Corps took over from the United States Army in Bougainville and the RNZAF was working in close support of them and an Australian Air Group based on Madang in new Guinea. An American assessment of the RNZAF's work in this role suggests that the New Zealanders gave on the whole "exceptionally good close support" to the Australian II Corps in Bougainville during late 1944 and 1945 and RNZAF pilots became "highly proficient in carrying out such operations". Before the war, United States airmen had been largely committed to a programme of daylight precision strategic bombing, but the nature of the conflict in the South and South-West Pacific theatres had presented few strategic targets and forced an emphasis on the development of tactical procedures. By this time Allied forces had achieved the complete local air superiority necessary for extensive tactical operations, and in close co-operation with Australian forces combined with an intimate knowledge of the area in which they were operating, RNZAF squadrons became highly skilled at this type of warfare. The United States Army Air Forces even looked to the New Zealanders' air support control doctrine in an attempt to improve their own liaison and communications systems, but unfortunately, "this experience came too late ... and in too isolated an area, to have significant influence on the development of close support tactics in World War II".[131]

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[129] Isitt to Findlay, 8 November 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[130] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, pp. 264-265.
[131] J. G. Taylor, "USAF Historical Studies No. 86: Close Air Support in the War Against Japan", USAF Historical Division, February 1955, pp. 31, 52-56, and J. G. Taylor "American Experience in the

The RNZAF's job was to "clean up" the 70,000 Japanese estimated to be in the area. Beyond that, Isitt could not see where the RNZAF was to go. This would probably depend on the war in the Philippines, and as soon as that situation was clearer, Isitt planned to go forward and see Kenney again. The immediate problem was to find a job for the RNZAF's medium bombers which Kenney had said he was to going to use for anti-submarine and shipping-escort escorts from Halmahera and the Southern Philippines or possibly the Celebes. Now that this looked unlikely, Isitt was considering a proposal from Pirie that these squadrons be converted to a transport role as it appeared there would be a shortage of this type in the near future and an operational role for them right up until the end of the war, either in the Pacific or in China. "I have not yet completely swallowed the idea", he told Findlay, but it did have merits and might warrant "very unofficial" discussions with American and British officers. Isitt would still have to sound out Kenney and the New Zealand war cabinet on the idea and then find out whether or not he could get transport aircraft instead of Venturas.[132]

The withdrawal of the United States Navy from areas now included in the South-West Pacific Area could subsequently cause major difficulties. Up until this time, the RNZAF had relied on American units to provide and maintain air strips, sea moorings and marine craft, shipping to and between the islands, accommodation, fuel, bombs, rations, power and water, malarial control, ports and piers, and some hospital facilities. With the reduction of United States Navy facilities, especially from Bougainville, Green Island and Emirau, New Zealand units might be forced to seek support from elsewhere. In view of New Zealand's manpower shortage, Isitt was reluctant to suggest that New Zealand could take over these facilities, and hoped that

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Southwest Pacific" in B. F. Cooling (ed.), *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support*, Washington D.C., Office of Air Force History, 1990, pp. 297-8, 327, 331-332. See also N. Baker "A Higher Plane: Land/Air Operations in the South-West Pacific 1942-1945" in J. Grey & P. Dennis (eds.) *From Past to Future: The Australian Experience of Land/Air Operations, Proceedings of the 1995 Australian Army History Conference*, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 1995, pp. 89-90. Other Australian sources include RAAF Historical Documents Series I: "Mopping Up Operations in the Solomon Islands - The Bougainville Campaign", pp. 1-13, RAAF Historical and Archives, Canberra, and R. Parkin "Learning While Fighting: The Evolution of Australian Close Air Support Doctrine, 1939-45" Ph.D Thesis, University of New South Wales, 1998. For a New Zealand serviceman's view of tactics see, for example, B. Cox, *Too Young to Die: The Story of a New Zealand Fighter Pilot in the Pacific War,* Auckland, Century Hutchinson, 1987, pp. 149-151; and "Report on Visit to Defence Forces in Pacific Islands Area, May-June 1945", pp. 1-3, NANZ Air 118/81n, appendix IVa.

the Australians might be prepared to take over some of them, especially shipping services and the supply of fuel, bombs and rations. Isitt hoped that Jones might raise this question with the Australians and that the government might come to an agreement similar to the lend-lease system operated with the Americans.[133]

Britain also asked New Zealand to consider providing personnel for the establishment of mobile naval air bases in the Pacific. New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff assumed that New Zealand along with other members of the Commonwealth with interests in the Pacific would be anxious to participate and assist Britain as much as possible, however, in light of the country's manpower situation recommended that no personnel should be offered for this scheme. It was likely that these units would be required for tropical service northwest of Australia and the chiefs argued that it would be more economical for these forces to come from and be commanded by Australian Army units already in the area. It was also probable that New Zealand would have a division operating somewhere in the Pacific about a year after the end of the war in Europe but, again, New Zealand wanted this force kept together in large formations rather than dispersed. The air force was the most likely to be operating in this area but, it too, had so far not been required to provide this type of service in the Pacific and the chiefs hoped to avoid the extra manpower responsibilities that would be required to take it on.[134]

At the beginning of December, Isitt informed MacArthur that while he would still maintain a suitable headquarters in the South Pacific Area, he now hoped to transfer the main command headquarters for the RNZAF from Guadalcanal to Los Negros or some other point within the South-West Pacific Area. This new headquarters would tentatively be designated RNZAF Pacific Command. It would absorb the New Zealand Air Task Force currently organised and based in Bougainville, and would be responsible for administration and command of all RNZAF forces in South-West Pacific and liaison with American commanders. The command would also be responsible for liaison with the United States 7th Fleet

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[132] Isitt to Findlay, 8 November 1944, NANZ Air 100/5.
[133] Isitt to Jones, "Probable Change of Logistic Support of RNZAF in Pacific", 1 November 1944, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2.
[134] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper No. 201, Establishment of Mobile Naval Air Bases (MONABS) in Pacific, 27 November 1944, NANZ Air 1 130/4/14.

Logistics which would be providing the RNZAF with aircraft logistic support.[135] At the same time, Fitch proposed that the senior New Zealand air officer in the South Pacific Area should take over the tactical command of all air units remaining in the South Pacific. Admiral Newton agreed that the air commander for the South Pacific no longer needed to be of Flag rank as it was his desire that South Pacific Air Command become only a supply agency.[136]

Isitt explained to Kenney at the end of the year that his major problems were now political and asked if he could give him any indication of the prospects of getting more into the war on the completion of the present job. "The government is full out to fight this war", he wrote, "but unless I can show them that we will get into the major fighting one of these days they are inclined to be influenced by the requests they are getting from Washington and London for food and material, and the tendency is to get men back into production." In the meantime, the RNZAF would continue with the formation of one administrative unit for all its squadrons in the Pacific and the move of this headquarters to Manus. This move would keep them firmly attached to the American 7th Fleet Logistic Section, and he also expected that the New Zealanders would be receiving replacement aircraft through this base. Moreover, it was well located for the RNZAF's present distribution, and also on the way forward to where Isitt hoped his squadrons would eventually be working. Isitt believed the move into South-West Pacific from base duties in the South Pacific Area had done the New Zealand squadrons good, but they remained hopeful of moving further forward.[137]

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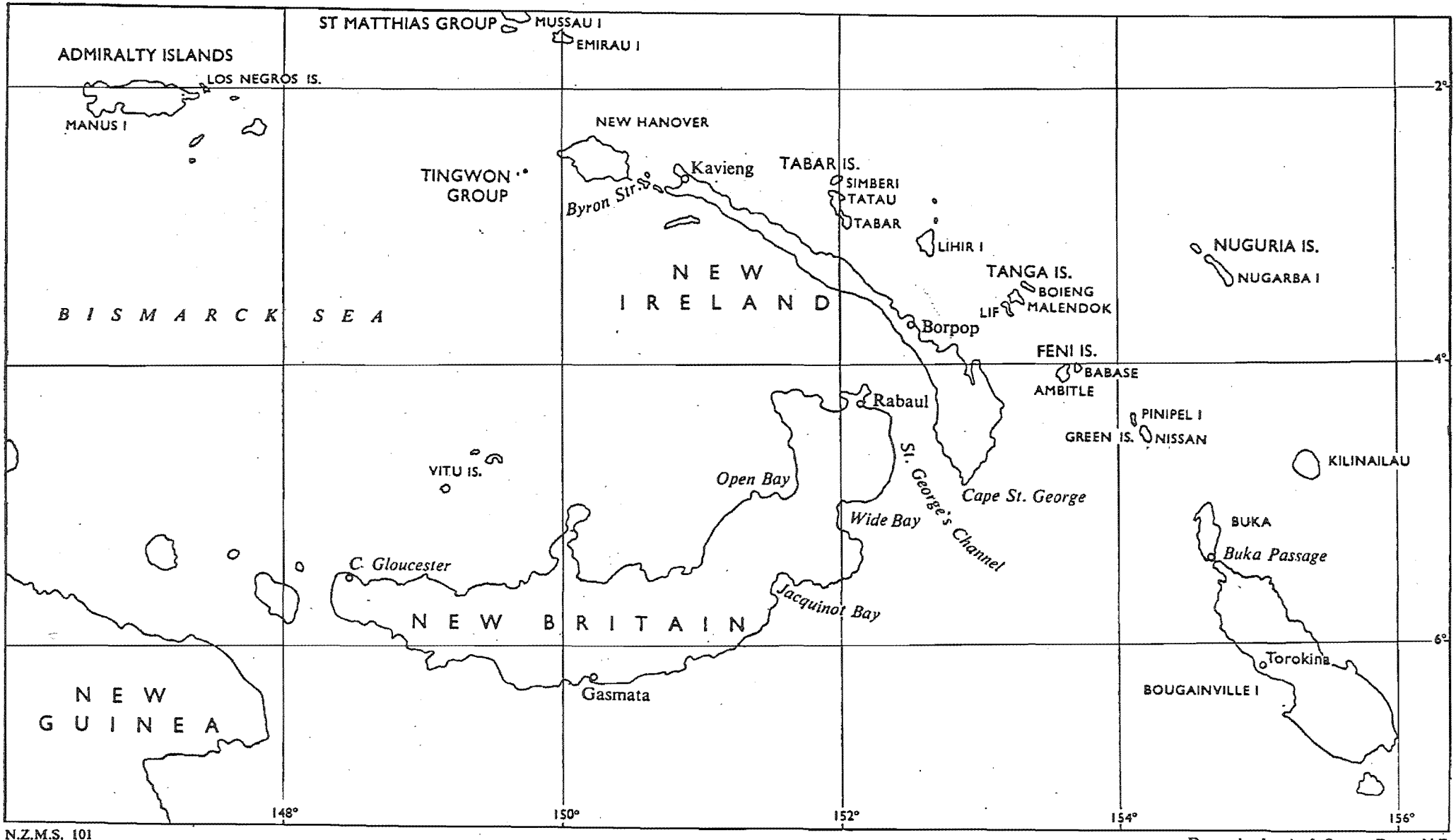
[135] Isitt to MacArthur, 7 December 1944; Pirie "Organisation: RNZAF in the Pacific", 21 November 1944, both NANZ Air 1 130/30/1.
[136] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 22 December 1944.
[137] Isitt to Kenney, 28 December 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.



N.Z.M.S. 101

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BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO AND NORTHERN SOLOMONS

Chapter Six

Mopping Up

If there is anything we are doing here that will help shorten the war by one day ... we would be happy to do it, BUT WE ARE NOT.

(RNZAF Serviceman, May 1945.)

The last year of the war against Japan saw the Royal New Zealand Air Force operating in support of the controversial Australian campaigns against Japanese forces by-passed in the South-West Pacific. While American forces fought their way through the Philippines and Central Pacific, New Zealand and Australia remained behind to continue the so-called "mopping-up" operations. The RNZAF maintained constant air patrols and harassment over the territory held by an estimated 125,000 isolated and stranded Japanese troops and gave tactical air support to the Australian Army in its campaign to reconquer and secure New Britain and the Northern Solomons. Even if the war against Japan could be successfully completed and Japan forced to surrender within the next two or three years, the Allies had no guarantee that these isolated enemy pockets throughout the Pacific would not still have to be subsequently destroyed in costly campaigns one by one. Yet it became increasingly controversial as to whether these pockets should merely be kept contained as self-supporting prisoner of war camps until then or instead whether campaigns should be vigorously pursued against them.

The Australians who replaced United States ground forces in the South-West Pacific were more inclined to wage active warfare against the Japanese with a resulting increase in casualties and controversy. While this may have been strategically justifiable in terms of Australia's bargaining position at the end of the war, there was as General Blamey noted, a strong feeling growing throughout the country that Australia was being "side-tracked" and the army's campaigns attracted "scant honour".[1] Many in New Zealand, and many RNZAF servicemen in the islands,

[1] Deane "The Balancing Act" pp. 12-15; Blamey quoted by D. Horner "The Military Strategy and Command Aspects of the Australian Army's Amphibious Operations in the South-West Pacific Area", in Wahlert *Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South-West Pacific*, p. 39. See especially P. Charlton, *The Unnecessary War: Island Campaigns of the South-west Pacific 1944-45*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1983, which argues that the islands were "self-supporting POW camps" of no strategic value, pp. 1-2, 33.

agreed that the operations were unnecessary and as the nation's manpower crisis deepened, its newspapers increasingly called for reductions in the size of the air force. Yet the controversy was never as serious as it was in Australia, and New Zealand had stumbled into a sensible strategic policy that would become more widespread in the conflicts of the late twentieth century. New Zealand was ideally represented by an air force which could maintain a strong national presence in the operational theatre and gain valuable experience while still producing comparatively less discomfort and fewer casualties and therefore less controversy than a similarly sized ground force.

The alleged importance of the operations was constantly stressed and at the end of the war Lieutenant-General Stanley Savige, commander of the Second Australian Corps, wrote of his deep gratitude to "the gallant airmen of New Zealand whose support in the air was magnificent and decisive."[2] With typical style, MacArthur complimented Fraser on his army and air forces in the Pacific. The RNZAF, he wrote, "in their support of ground operations and attacks on Rabaul and enemy positions in Bougainville have ... commanded my affection and high commendation. From our association I shall ever hold the New Zealand people in deep affection and I pray that God will further their country's cause in the future as he has so obviously blessed their arms in the past."[3]

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey details how shipping and supply difficulties continued to hamper New Zealand's air effort throughout the war and claims that it had become apparent "that the already strained supply organisation of the RNZAF could not be stretched further ... therefore New Zealand squadrons received the primary task of giving both close and long-range air support to Australian ground troops engaged in mopping-up the by-passed or neutralised areas."[4] The reality was that Australia and New Zealand had been held back for largely political reasons as American attention turned northward and began to consider the end of the war. Although never as much as New Zealand officials would have liked, the South Pacific had briefly been the focus of a relatively large amount of American attention

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[2] Order of the Day by Lieutenant-General S. G. Savige, HQ 2 Australian Corps 8 September 1945, RNZAF Archives 91/116.2.

[3] General Douglas MacArthur, "Message of Tribute to Australian, New Zealand and Dutch Forces", 21 August 1945, Australian War Memorial Archives, AWM 54 211/1/4.

in the opening stages of the Pacific war as Allied forces and command structures were hastily set up after the shock of Pearl Harbor and Japan's stunning initial expansion. Once the immediate threat to the Allied position had been stabilised, however, the Japanese were gradually forced back towards their homeland. The day to day running of operational forces and structures could then be turned over to lower levels of command and administration and eventually be handed over to lesser allies or allowed to close down.

At the beginning of 1945, the RNZAF had six fighter squadrons and two bomber-reconnaissance squadrons serving in the South-West Pacific Area under General Kenney (Commander, Allied Air Forces) through General Mitchell, his subordinate in the Northern Solomons. There were also two other fighter squadrons and another bomber-reconnaissance squadron still based in the South Pacific Area on garrison duties, but due to be transferred to South-West Pacific shortly. Two flying-boat squadrons were located in South Pacific and due to remain there for some time yet carrying out convoy escort and anti-submarine duties. The RNZAF had a commitment to Kenney until the conclusion of the present operations in the Northern Solomon Islands and Bismarck area. What was to happen after this was undecided; although if no other alternative was offered, it was expected that New Zealand units would remain under American command in this area.

The fighter squadrons in the Pacific were generally manned by 27 pilots and based on separate servicing units with 18 Corsairs each. The normal procedure was for a squadron to form in New Zealand and carry out three weeks training before proceeding to its forward destination where it would remain for approximately 12 weeks before returning to New Zealand for three weeks leave. Personnel were expected to be tour-expired for tropical service after three such tours, but it was found that this rotational system was so successful that many applied for fourth or even fifth tours. In general, bomber-reconnaissance squadrons operated on a similar rotational pattern, although their tours of duty were usually longer than the fighter pilots. Because of transport difficulties and the need to rotate aircrew more quickly, it had been decided in June 1943 to separate aircrew from their groundstaff who were

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[4] United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific), *Number 61: Air Forces Allied with the United States in the War against Japan,* Naval Analysis Division, 1946, p. 10. The same explanation is also

organised into servicing units with personnel serving tours of approximately 12 months. Flying-boat squadrons worked to a different system in that they were complete squadrons including servicing units. Crews were expected to serve for six months before being given a month leave in New Zealand.[5]

Our main desire is to get into major active operations once more.
(Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt, January 1945)

Early in January, Isitt wrote to Rear Admiral R. H. Portal, the Royal Navy Flag Officer in Australia, that he did not feel he would be letting the Americans down if the RNZAF transferred to British command. Isitt explained to Portal that after the American Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided in mid-1944 that the RNZAF would remain in the South Pacific Area he had gone to Washington to plead for a more active role. As a result it had been agreed that any squadrons surplus to shipping and base protection requirements in the South Pacific Area could be transferred to operations in the South-West Pacific. This had been discussed with the British Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington and with the Chief of Air Staff of the Royal Air Force, and his Plans Division, in London, and it had been agreed that at the time this offered the best prospects of an active role. It had been felt that further employment could be reviewed when British forces entered the Pacific. It now appeared that the RNZAF's allotted role of assisting the Australians in the South-West Pacific would soon be completed and the RNZAF would be seeking employment again. "Our main desire, Isitt told Portal, "is to get into major active operations once more."[6]

The problem, Isitt explained, was that while the New Zealand Government was anxious and willing to do all it could in the prosecution of the war, its members already had a half-formed opinion that the RNZAF was not fully employed in its present role in the Pacific. Furthermore, some felt that the Americans were half-hearted in their employment of New Zealand units and that the only reason they were employed at all was in response to pressure from him and Goddard. "I have been accused", said Isitt, "of trying to sell my force to the Americans ... [and] any further

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given on page 7 for Australia's position.

[5] For an extremely detailed analysis and statistical breakdown of all aspects of the air force in New Zealand and the Pacific towards the end of the war see "Royal New Zealand Air Force - Review for the Minister of Defence", 4 July 1945, in Jones Papers, Alexander Turnbull Collection MS Papers 2183/9.

[6] Isitt to Portal, 9 January 1945, NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3.

suggestion that I was peddling the services of the RNZAF would have a very unsatisfactory re-action." For this reason, Isitt hoped Portal would officially approach him or the New Zealand Government and bring up the subject of Royal Navy interest in, and need for, the assistance of the RNZAF. This would pave the way for Isitt to investigate officially the ways and means of such a transfer. Furthermore, Portal was assured, "a guarantee of a really active role for the RNZAF would carry great weight with the New Zealand Government". Isitt offered Portal all eight fighter squadrons, three bomber-reconnaissance squadrons and two flying-boat squadrons now in the Pacific plus sufficient transport aircraft to operate between New Zealand and the forward area. The remaining New Zealand squadrons were required for training, leave and organisation, but he would consider re-equipping the bomber-reconnaissance squadrons with transport aircraft for supply and support if this would be more useful.[7]

The commander of the New Zealand Air Task Force, Group Captain Geoffrey Roberts, also produced an appreciation at this time of the possible operational future of the South-West Pacific Area for the Air Department. It was safe to assume, he believed, that American army and navy commands now had only "a mere passing interest" in the area and wished to take units from it that would be useful in their forward drive. Given the circumstances, Roberts felt that this was understandable and the RNZAF must therefore adopt a realistic attitude towards future planning. Australian army and air forces, and the RNZAF, would soon be the only garrison forces left in Bougainville, New Britain, Emirau and Green Island. At present the RNZAF had enough forces in the Northern Solomons to cope with any contingency that might arise and any more would be wasteful, unless there was absolutely no better employment for them elsewhere. Roberts estimated that the Australian campaign in Bougainville should be finished about September 1945, thus releasing squadrons based on that island, and the completion of ground operations on New Britain and New Ireland would release further squadrons based on Green and Emirau. The one advantage he could see of having all available New Zealand squadrons in the Northern Solomons area was that it would make it easier to ship them further forward. The

[7] ibid. On the British Pacific Fleet see J. Winton, *The Forgotten Fleet: The Story of the British Pacific Fleet 1944-45*, London, Douglas Boyd, 1969, especially pp. 61, 284. For the American view of Royal

problem was; to where? Shortly even the Philippines campaign would be effectively complete. Although he felt that the time was not right to approach Kenney, who was busy in the Philippines, Roberts offered to discuss future possibilities with him as soon as possible. The danger was that detailed, long-range planning was being overlooked for the rear areas so New Zealand had to take it as its own responsibility to anticipate forthcoming changes and plan accordingly.[8]

At the same time, Air Commodore Sir Robert Clark-Hall, Air Officer Commanding No. 1 (Islands) Group, wanted to supplement his colleague's assessment with a few remarks of his own. Blunt, forthright, and no-nonsense, Sir Robert had already had a successful career in the RAF and retired to New Zealand as an air-marshal. At the outbreak of war he had offered his services to the RNZAF, even at a much lower rank, and celebrated his sixty-second birthday by going on a bomber raid over Rabaul.[9] As the man on the spot, Clark-Hall felt he was handicapped in giving an accurate forecast by the fact that the RNZAF in the Pacific worked under both army and navy commands. Furthermore, although close liaison could be maintained with the commander of the South Pacific Area, this was not so with General Kenney who was still largely unaware of the existence of Islands Group. He hoped that the movement of Group Headquarters to Manus and direct communication between Roberts and Kenney would prevent the RNZAF from being "left behind in the cold". Clark-Hall had no doubt that both army and navy commands of the United States were thinking only of moving forward and "tending to forget the past help and reputation of the RNZAF". Not unnaturally, they were not very keen on leaving behind small pockets of men to do what they regarded as domestic chores for the New Zealanders.[10]

Clark-Hall forecasted that by April the area up to Bougainville would be as safe as New Zealand. From then until about October, New Zealand's main strength would be concentrated at Bougainville and Emirau; at Green, to "assist the Australians in their small local war" in the Northern Solomons, and at Manus for defence of that base. After this, New Zealand units in this area would be surplus to any requirements.

Navy involvement in the Pacific see Hayes, pp. 630-638.

[8] Group Captain Geoffrey Roberts, Commander New Zealand Air Task Force, "Appreciation of the Possible Operational Future of COMAIRNORSOLS/COMZEAIRTAF Area in South-West Pacific", 4 January 1945, NANZ Air 1 130/30/1.

[9] Bentley, pp. 127-128.

New Zealand, he argued, had to start thinking immediately about what could be offered to United States or even to British commanders. Sir Robert felt that the RNZAF's main assets were good aircrew and maintenance personnel and, as long as New Zealand did not insist on them remaining integrated as a separate force: "we would be welcomed anywhere and our domestic chores done for us by people with smaller problems of manpower". He could think of little objection and plenty of advantage in allowing New Zealand personnel to work as necessary with different task forces. Moreover, an RNZAF Pacific command should only be maintained for administrative purposes such as discipline, promotion, postings, reliefs, education, and supplies peculiar to New Zealand (such as clothing). Although ever-longer lines of communications would mean New Zealand could support reduced numbers of squadrons and necessitate longer tours of duty, such a command should be kept mobile and be prepared to move to the Philippines in late 1945, on to Hainan or Formosa by 1946, and then to Nagasaki or Kagoshima by the end of the war in 1948 or 1949.[11]

Shortly afterwards, Roberts told Isitt that he had been informed that the proposed take-over from General Mitchell was now going to be delayed until March or even April due to a delay in sending the First Marine Air Wing forward to the Philippines. Roberts knew that this would cause Isitt considerable annoyance as the "gilt will be off the gingerbread before we assume control". By that time, the Bougainville campaign would be well under way and the RAAF would be operating, and possibly even in control at New Britain. Roberts was also concerned that the long delay in the change-over was causing undue delays in the release of publicity for his task force. "I can well imagine", he told Isitt, "the mighty New Zealand public may again start asking embarrassing, even if unjustifiable, questions." He hoped he might still step up publicity from the area without upsetting New Zealand's allies because, although the Americans were still in control, RNZAF units now predominated in the area. This, he thought, might also assist Isitt in his current political difficulties.[12]

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[10] Air Commodore Sir Robert Clark-Hall, Air Officer Commanding No. 1 (Islands) Group, "Future of the RNZAF in the Pacific", 15 January 1945, NANZ Air 1 130/30/1.
[11] ibid.
[12] Roberts to Isitt, 19 January 1945, NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3.

New Zealand air commanders were now in complete control at Piva and Green Island while at Emirau and Los Negros they were effectively in operational command although acting under more senior American officers. General Mitchell approved the absorption of several more New Zealand officers in his staff and the balance were being employed on other islands awaiting the change-over. By moving about the units, planning for the future and representing New Zealand interests to General Mitchell, Roberts assured Isitt, "we really have plenty to do". The squadrons were all very keen and "on the ball", particularly those engaged in support work with the Australian army. They had had many complimentary despatches from Australian divisional and brigade commanders and were enjoying the work and especially seeing results from it. Apart from that, all was going well with the task force even though they were all rather exasperated that their time of trial has been prolonged far beyond what had been expected.[13]

If the New Zealanders were growing restless, so too were the Australians. The Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, Air Vice-Marshal William Bostock informed Kenney that while he understood that the RNZAF were to have responsibility for the Northern Solomons and Admiralty Islands areas following the move of the American squadrons into the Philippines, it might actually be better for him to be in command. Bostock reminded Kenney that the RAAF was to provide all fighter control, air warning facilities, airstrip maintenance and scheduled air transportation in these areas in addition to providing the army co-operation requirements for the Second Australian Corps in Bougainville. "It would appear", he wrote, "that the RNZAF is not organised suitably to accept area responsibility. I feel under these circumstances that a simpler, cleaner and more efficient system of operational control will result if the Royal New Zealand Air Task Force, now operating in those areas, was placed under my operational control. This would necessitate a consequential extension of my area of responsibility."[14]

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[13] ibid.

[14] Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, Air Vice-Marshal W. D. Bostock to General Kenney, "Changes in Air Force Areas of Responsibility for Operations, First Quarter, 1945", 15 January 1945, Australian Archives AA 1969/100/6 320.5B4(2), "Organisation of RAAF for Operations".

Any feeling that our squadrons were not fully employed would start the battle all over again.

(Air Vice-Marshal Leonard Isitt, March 1945)

Isitt admitted to Jones that the work on which New Zealand squadrons were engaged was "not spectacular", but it was, he argued, essential nonetheless. This had become especially so since the Australian Army had taken over responsibility for ground operations in the Bismarck-Northern Solomons area and was pressing them to conclusion much more rapidly. As soon as the last transfers from the South Pacific Area were completed, New Zealand would have for this task:

Los Negros	2 Fighter Squadron	1 Bomber-reconnaissance Squadron
Green Island	2 Fighter Squadrons	1 Bomber-reconnaissance Squadron
Emirau	1 Fighter Squadron	1 Bomber-reconnaissance Squadron
Bougainville	3 Fighter Squadrons	

The latest direction from Kenney, however, was that the RNZAF would continue to be responsible for the base protection of this area and for collaboration with, and support of the RAAF. This, Isitt told Jones, "cannot be received with any satisfaction, and representations on this matter will continue to be made to [Kenney] with request that some, if not all, of our squadrons are allotted a role in a more active theatre which, I understand, is the desire of the Government." Isitt hoped to travel to Melbourne early in February for discussions with Portal and Bostock, and then immediately afterwards to Kenney's headquarters in Leyte.[15]

Even by the end of 1944, it had become clear that the RNZAF would be faced with insufficient personnel to maintain and operate air strips, communications, air-sea rescue, malarial control and base hospital facilities. There would also be no organisation for the supply and handling of rations, fuel, engineering stores, ammunition and bombs. After discussing these matters with Australian army and air force commanders and with United States army and naval authorities, Isitt was able to report to the New Zealand government that arrangements would be made so that the RNZAF could continue to operate without significantly greater manpower demands. The Australian First Army would now provide supplies for RNZAF personnel on Bougainville, Emirau and Green Island, the Royal Australian Air Force would

[15] Isitt to Jones, "Employment of RNZAF in the Pacific", 29 January 1945, NANZ EA 1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

maintain air strips and radar and fighter control throughout the group and the United States 7th Fleet would supply fuel and munitions for RNZAF units. Many American army meteorological and communications services would remain, but the RNZAF would have to increase personnel to maintain an air-sea rescue organisation, as well as malarial control and the handling of fuels and other supplies. Isitt presumed that any equipment, such as crash boats, fire tenders, trucks, and fuels storage taken over from United States forces would be accounted for through lend-lease. As the RNZAF was now working in direct support of Australian military forces and in Australian mandated territory, he presumed that Australia would bear the cost of any supplies provided by them, although this was of course a matter for the two governments to discuss.[16]

Throughout his discussions with American and Australian commanders, Isitt was aware that the present arrangement in which the RNZAF served directly under Kenney was unsatisfactory. RNZAF units were now serving in a totally Australian area in which air operations were under the control of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, and Kenney was having to consult with him before issuing instructions to the New Zealanders. This was proving cumbersome and Isitt was asked by Bostock and Kenney, as well as by the Commander in Chief of the British Pacific Fleet, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser and the Commander in Chief of Australian Land Forces, General Blamey, to agree to operational control of the RNZAF in the Pacific being exercised by RAAF Command. This would mean that general responsibility and operational policy for RNZAF units in the area would be laid down by Bostock within general terms issued by Kenney, while their operational direction and work would still remain under RNZAF officers and staff. This, Isitt believed, would bring about close controlling collaboration and if the New Zealand government approved, Bostock was most anxious to visit Wellington as soon as possible to discuss this matter more fully, and present his views on the future employment of the RNZAF.[17]

On 14 February, Kenney's headquarters informed Bostock that his proposal to place the New Zealand Air Task Force under his operational command had been accepted by Kenney and the New Zealanders had concurred. Bostock should now

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[16] Isitt to Jones, "Report on Visit to Australia and the Pacific Areas", 21 February 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2, pp. 1-2.

prepare to assume control of all operations in the Solomons Area upon the departure of the First Marine Air Wing.[18] Isitt hoped Bostock would talk to Kenney about a transfer of responsibilities before the move out of the First Marine Air Wing. He doubted that the Americans would agree, but felt that the obvious solution would be to cancel the appointment of the Northern Solomons air commander and hand the responsibilities for operational control in the area over to Bostock. General Mitchell could then assume his role as commander of the First Marine Air Wing which was now spread very considerably with very little actual operational strength in the Northern Solomon Islands. Isitt knew it would be a ticklish question and was prepared to place it before Mitchell verbally if he came to New Zealand, but was not prepared to raise it on paper. "I think we can be sure", he told Bostock, that Kenney "would not place COMAIRNORSOLS under your direction so long as an American is holding this appointment." In the meantime, an early decision on the future role of the RNZAF had been considerably delayed as the war cabinet considered the country's manpower resources and the future employment of New Zealand's division in Europe after the end of the war with Germany. At these meetings, Isitt intended to recommend that the RNZAF be employed with the RAAF Task Force and hoped Bostock could come to Wellington to support him in making his case.[19]

Kenney indicated to Isitt that upon completion of the campaign in the Northern Solomons, the RNZAF would support a RAAF task force in their operations against Borneo and in the Netherlands East Indies. Bostock informed Isitt that he was keen to secure this support which would mean that operations in this area could be undertaken entirely by British forces, mainly Australians, and it would not be necessary to ask for assistance from the United States. "The more I think about the matter", he told Isitt, "the more anxious I become to obtain the services of a New Zealand Corsair Wing of three or four squadrons for employment with my Task Force in time to participate in the latter portion of the OBOE series of operations. I do hope that it will be possible

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[17] ibid., pp. 2-3.
[18] Headquarters United States Army Air Force SWPA to Bostock, 14 February 1945, Australian Archives, AA 1969/100/6 320.5B4(2) "Organisation of RAAF for Operations". Also G. C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1949, (1997 Reprint, United States Air Force History and Museums Program) p. 521.
[19] Isitt to Bostock, 28 February 1945, NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3.

to achieve this."[20] On the other hand, Admiral Fraser also asked Isitt if he could supply RNZAF Corsair squadrons for embarkation and service from British aircraft carriers. There was much to recommend both roles, but New Zealand would have to choose one or the other. Depending on the completion of the Northern Solomons campaign, New Zealand could provide three carrier groups of two squadrons each with the Royal Navy. This would have the great advantage of involving a portion of the RNZAF in an active role directly against Japan. It would enhance service and public morale and simplify problems of supply and support. The disadvantages would be, firstly, a change in training and planning programmes which might keep the squadrons out of service for some time, and secondly, New Zealand would largely lose administrative and operational control of its personnel.[21]

The other alternative of service with the RAAF would involve RNZAF wings of three or four squadrons under the administration and command of RNZAF officers. New Zealand would not have the same freedom of operational direction as it now had, but Bostock indicated that he would accept RNZAF officers for employment on RAAF Staffs. Except for the provision of aircraft spares, supply would not present any further difficulties and there would be the advantage of continuity of employment in the same area and the same type of work. The only disadvantage would be employment in what might be considered a secondary front, but Isitt believed close association between the RNZAF and the RAAF would be essential for the immediate and future post-war period. The Australian Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Sir George Jones, had also raised the possibility of an interchange of personnel between the RAAF and RNZAF and asked whether surplus aircrew could be made available for service with the RAAF. Isitt told his government that "from the point of view of immediate operations and the future collaboration of the two services, this appears to be fully in accord with the spirit and intention of the Canberra Pact of January 1944, and should provide for the employment of some of the trained personnel not now required by the RAF".[22]

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[20] Bostock to Isitt, (no date given) March 1945, NANZ Air 100/11; on the Borneo Operations, P. Dennis (et al.) *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 109-116.

[21] Isitt to Jones, "Report on Visit to Australia and the Pacific Areas", 21 February 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/1 pt. 2, pp. 3-5.

[22] ibid.

Isitt was now anxious for Clark-Hall and Roberts to visit Bostock in Brisbane to discuss the general details of placing the New Zealand Air Task Force under the broad operational control of RAAF Command which at this stage remained only in the planning stage. The Australian Air Board in Melbourne had not become involved yet and as these dealings would mainly concern operations, Isitt did not believe they would require much discussion with Melbourne. On the logistic side, however, the RNZAF's support in the South-West Pacific now rested entirely with the First Australian Army at Lae and with the Advanced Land Headquarters at Hollandia. "There would appear to be little else we can do in this matter", Isitt confessed to Clark-Hall, "until a firm directive for obtaining support for the RNZAF in the Northern Solomons is issued by GHQ, South-West Pacific, to the Australian Army, the 7th Fleet, and any other Commands concerned". Clark-Hall had suggested that he also visit Admiral Portal, but Isitt preferred him to wait. Any question of RNZAF fighter squadrons being employed with the Royal Navy Pacific Fleet was now most indefinite and being handled entirely on a government level. No decision had yet been made, but it already appeared doubtful that the RNZAF would join the British Navy.[23]

Isitt had informed Nevill from Melbourne early in February that conversations with the Royal Navy had been most encouraging. "They definitely want our assistance", he wrote, "and could absorb all fighter and boat squadrons early". Isitt insisted that all personnel should be employed as complete New Zealand squadrons and not lose their identity by transferring to the Fleet Air Arm. This was accepted by British officials in Australia, subject to Admiralty concurrence, and by New Zealand's War Cabinet. Two months later, however, Isitt informed Portal that he should not plan on any RNZAF Corsair squadrons. Although the final decision would not be made until Fraser returned from discussions on manpower and the future of New Zealand's armed forces in London, by April it appeared unlikely that RNZAF squadrons would join the British Pacific Fleet. If they did, Isitt hoped that Britain would be able to supply the Corsairs needed to meet the squadrons' attrition. Portal replied on 9 April that British supplies of Corsairs were barely sufficient to maintain Royal Navy squadrons and would remain uncertain for some time yet. Portal

[23] Isitt to Clark-Hall, 22 February 1944, NANZ Air 100/4.

suggested that New Zealand squadrons would, nonetheless, be most welcome on British carriers as reliefs for British squadrons. RNZAF Corsairs could be maintained for training purposes while British Corsairs were retained for carrier use. This scheme, he speculated, could be sustained for some time and would also remove the need to convert New Zealand aircraft for carrier use.[24]

Discussions were continued in London and Washington, and with General Kenney, to try to obtain a clear definition of future operational policy for the RNZAF. In mid-May, New Zealand's Naval Chief, Commodore Atwell Lake, informed the British Pacific Fleet Commander, Admiral Fraser, that he had discussed the matter with Nash and Isitt and it appeared that the RNZAF squadrons would now be fully employed in the South-West Pacific. The RNZAF would remain under MacArthur's command and the General had so far refused to release squadrons, arguing that he would then have to replace them from other sources which the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington would not be likely to approve. Instead MacArthur was detailing the move of three of these squadrons to the Netherlands East Indies for operations with the RAAF Task Force. Operations in the area would, therefore, absorb New Zealand's full output of Corsair pilots. The only way New Zealand could assist would be if the matter was raised before the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. Even then, it was felt in Wellington that it would be many months before an agreement would be reached in Washington and then replacements for the New Zealand squadrons arranged. While the government was keen to assist Britain, Lake felt that "it would not be expedient" to suggest alterations of the current plans except in case of urgent need. Admiral Fraser agreed, but because of a worldwide shortage of Corsairs, still wished the Combined Chiefs of Staff to be aware of the alternative of New Zealand supplying corsairs or even taking over an escort carrier in case requirements in South-West Pacific became less pressing.[25]

Finally in July, the Admiralty informed Admiral Fraser that while the loan of New Zealand Corsair squadrons would be a "most welcome reinforcement", the retention of personnel as part of integrated RNZAF units might involve "considerable administrative difficulties particularly in regard to pay code". This was the

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[24] Signals re Proposed Attachment to British Pacific Fleet, NANZ Air 1 130/31/1.

Admiralty's polite way of saying that New Zealand's desire to maintain national squadrons within the Royal Navy would not work. The RNZAF had not stated whether or not it would be providing replacement pilots, but in practice, it would almost certainly be necessary to feed British naval pilots into the squadrons to make up casualties. Squadrons would thus rapidly become intermingled and lose their RNZAF identity. The Admiralty suggested that Admiral Fraser consult New Zealand authorities about persuading the equivalent personnel of three Corsair Squadrons plus maintenance crew to volunteer to transfer to the Royal New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve. These personnel would be employed together as far as possible in Corsair squadrons with British Pacific Fleet aircraft and equipment. This would obviate the administrative difficulties and form the nucleus for an air arm of the New Zealand Navy if the government decided to take such a course later. Britain was prepared to approach the New Zealand Government formally through the Dominions Office if this was accepted by the New Zealand Navy and, presumably, the RNZAF.[26]

After he and Roberts met with Bostock in Brisbane, Clark-Hall informed Isitt that the RAAF would welcome three or four Corsair squadrons to assist in the Borneo campaign, probably at Balik Papan. Bostock hoped Isitt and the New Zealand Government would consider this and then present it to General Kenney. Bostock's idea was to have a separate, self-contained RNZAF fighter wing working operationally directly under his Tactical Air Force rather than under Kenney. Clark-Hall estimated that if Emirau were to be closed down, and reductions made in other places, he would be able to supply enough personnel to man a wing headquarters somewhere. The move would mean a doubling of the length of the line of air transport and communications, but if New Zealand could obtain a ship or if one or even two of the Ventura squadrons could be converted to air transport squadrons this problem could be overcome. The most difficult problem would be the supply of Corsair spares, but Clark-Hall was confident that even this could be overcome with time.[27]

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[25] Signals re Proposed Attachment to British Pacific Fleet, and Commander in Chief British Pacific Fleet to New Zealand Navy Office, 11 May 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-2b.
[26] Admiralty to Admiral Fraser repeated to New Zealand Naval Board, 20 July 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.
[27] Clark-Hall to Isitt, 12 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

Clark-Hall also felt that Roberts should come down from Bougainville to Guadalcanal for a few months experience. At the moment, he believed, Roberts had the impression that "the tail [was] trying to wag the dog". However, if he could get a clearer understanding of how closely logistics and administration were interwoven with operational policy, he would probably advocate getting both under one head by moving No. 1 (Islands) Group to Bougainville once General Mitchell left. The RNZAF would then achieve its "long wished for ideal" by making Roberts the only person in the Pacific with whom the RAAF would have to deal.[28]

Roberts suggested that a better option would be to dissolve Islands Group and transfer its responsibilities and functions to the New Zealand Air Task Force. This would have the advantage of concentrating New Zealand's senior air force headquarters in the operational area. It would encourage closer liaison with the northern Solomons air command and reduce staff requirements. Moreover, it would "increase the authority of the New Zealand Air Task Force and thereby its status with the United States Commands, and also maintain the prestige of the RNZAF in the Pacific and the relations between Air Department and the New Zealand Government". Finally, it would not only ensure efficient employment, but would eliminate the "post office attitude" of some personnel and, as a result, preclude any possibility of the "somewhat temperamental, or even dangerously ill-informed, New Zealand public" from criticising the air force through the press.[29]

Roberts told Clark-Hall that he was not opposed to operations and administration staff being separate provided each staff had an intimate knowledge and understanding of the problems and role of the other. In this case, however, there were problems because of the continued delay in the New Zealand Air Task Force being able to fulfil their assigned role. The move forward of the American Northern Solomons command was being postponed each month and by the time the New Zealanders took over, there was every chance that the job would be finished.[30]

Isitt informed Kenney that the transfer of operational command to the RAAF would be the reasonable and logical thing to do, but agreed that it could not happen

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[28] Clark-Hall to Bannerman, 13 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

[29] Roberts to No. 1 (Islands) Group, "Appreciation on the Administration of the RNZAF in the Pacific", 16 March 1945, cited in the official history draft, "No. 1 (Islands) Group", NANZ Air 118/40, paragraphs 110-118; original in NANZ Air 1 131/1/15.

until the First Marine Air Wing moved out. Unfortunately, with this not now expected to happen until possibly August or even September, Isitt had to ask Kenney if he could see any method of better co-ordinating the operational control of the area. It was not that the RNZAF was unhappy under Mitchell, but it was felt that Bostock was in close contact with the First Australian Army and might be in a better position to appreciate their requirements for the proposed Bismarcks operations.[31]

Isitt felt that operations in support of the Australians at Bougainville were going well. Major-General William Bridgeford told him that without RNZAF assistance, operations of the Australian 3 Division could not possibly have reached their present favourable stage and the loss of life in the Division would have been heavy indeed even in achieving far more qualified successes.[32] Yet Isitt was becoming concerned that he was building up too much strength on Bougainville. He hoped Kenney would allow him to move some squadrons further forward so that they could take part in the latter phases of the OBOE operations. This was necessary from a political angle because Isitt had just won a week's battle on manpower questions and obtained Government approval to maintain the present air force strength. However, the New Zealand Government was being pressed to increase food supplies by both the United States and Great Britain and, Isitt told Kenney, "any feeling that our squadrons were not fully employed would start the battle all over again". As for the problem of aircraft supplies, Isitt told Kenney he was investigating other sources of supply for Corsairs and also the possibility of getting some Mosquitoes from Britain to be used instead of the Venturas if he could not obtain transport aircraft. There had been suggestions of Spitfires, but he felt they would not have the necessary range for the Pacific. Once again, Isitt stressed that he would prefer not to change types because of the time that would be lost in converting squadrons to a new type, although he could see advantages in the Mosquito which would also be used by the RAAF Task Force.[33]

MacArthur had stated that the primary role of Australian forces in the South-West Pacific would be the protection of existing installations, but offensive operations

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[30] Roberts to Clark-Hall, 16 March 1945, NANZ Air 1 131/1/15.
[31] Isitt to Kenney, 13 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/9.
[32] "Air Strike in Support of 15 Australian Infantry Brigade", Headquarters 3 Australian Division AIF, 10 June 1945, Australian War Memorial Archives, AWM 54 85/3/6 and "Air Operations - Bougainville", AWM 3DRL 2529 Item 75, appendix b.
[33] Isitt to Kenney, 13 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/9.

could be undertaken as long as they would not require the commitment of major forces. Japanese aircraft had not been seen on Bougainville since two single Japanese aircraft raided Empress Augusta Bay early in March 1944. The opinion of the United States XIV Corps, which the Australians had replaced, was that Japanese morale was very poor due to lack of adequate food, medical supplies, weapons and reinforcements. A lengthy report from a Bougainville coastwatcher as early as December 1943, described the deteriorating condition of the Japanese on the island. "Many east coast Japanese appear to have no fixed quarters", the coastwatcher noted. "Clothing and equipment are old. Some are sick and under-nourished, living only on native foods. Japanese trenches have mostly collapsed. Enemy troops have been warned not to disclose their position by firing at aircraft. All beach natives have fled to the bush."[34] The Americans were only interested in protecting their naval and air installations and thought the destruction of stranded enemy forces was not worth the expenditure of American lives or material. The Australians, however, believed that although medical supplies were severely limited, the Japanese forces in the area had stores, gardens and arms, and could still put up a good fight. Once Australian units began more aggressive operations, RNZAF squadrons had targets designated by 2 Australian Corps Headquarters. Sometimes only 200-500 metres from advanced troops, the New Zealanders would be guided in by Australian artillery or mortar smoke, or by RAAF aircraft dropping smoke bombs. The Australians on the ground would then move in to secure the position before the Japanese had recovered from the effects of the bombing. Altogether, 15,618 sorties were flown by Allied aircraft, predominantly RNZAF, over Bougainville from November 1944 to August 1945 and over 6,000 tons of bombs were dropped.[35]

As well as close air support for the Australian Army, RNZAF squadrons continued air patrols over the area keeping roads and bridges in a state of disrepair and watching out for Japanese bivouacs, gardens, stores dumps and barge traffic. Interrogation of Japanese prisoners revealed that in some areas of Bougainville, fishing was possible, and rice and potatoes could be grown in gardens while in others,

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[34] War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 28 December 1943.
[35] "Report on Operational and Administrative Activities, 2 Australian Corps AIF in the Northern Solomons Area October 1944 - August 1945", Australian War Memorial Archives (F940.5426sn R425 v 1-2), pp. 1-4, 62-67.

troops had not seen rice for over a year and were living on grass and what local fruit could be found.[36] Rabaul remained relatively heavily defended and well supplied with equipment and locally-grown food. It was still considered too strong to attack directly and so remained subject to anti-submarine patrols to prevent re-supply and constant nuisance bombing especially high night-bombing with the object of keeping Japanese personnel from their mosquito nets. According to one report, the morale of Australian troops would be too seriously affected by any operation involving high casualties in view of the belief that Rabaul was not an important military objective at this stage of the war.[37]

Like their RNZAF cousins, Australian soldiers needed careful management because "a feeling of the futility of this campaign" was greatly aggravating other more normal problems of supply, and mental and physical exhaustion.[38] Squadron operations books record that at least airmen could break the routine with a little excitement on duty and it seems that new targets were well received. One day in March, for example, an Australian pilot discovered a Japanese barge and made seven strafing runs over it leaving it sinking gradually. When the news of this find reached 5 Squadron RAAF base, another Australian was sent out in a Boomerang accompanied by two New Zealand Corsairs which bombed the sinking barge before the three made a further 14 strafing runs over the vessel.[39]

By comparison, General Mitchell thought Isitt's next suggestion of slipping down to New Zealand for another crack at the Tongariro was a marvellous one. "I can picture every inch of those famous pools", he told Isitt, "and almost feel a tug as Grandpa Rainbow takes the fly." He had even suggested that Kenney should celebrate his recent promotion to full general by joining him, but was sceptical of it actually happening. As for his Marine Air Wing, this would be withdrawn in increments over the next couple of months after which no further units would be moved forward.

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[36] "Japanese ration Problems in Bougainville" 11 Australian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary Number 4 (26 April - 3 May 1945), AWM 54 423/11/19, also "Surrender of Japanese Forces - Interrogation of Japanese Officers SWPA", AWM 54 41/4/57, pp. 6-12.

[37] "Appreciation of Situation re Capture of Rabaul", Lieutenant-Colonel R. E. Wade 11 Australian Division, 28 February 1945, AWM 54 608/1/3, pp. 1-3.

[38] For example 2 Australian Corps Bougainville "Report on Operations 29 Australian Infantry Brigade" (Vol II 12 May -15 August 1945), AWM 3DRL 2529 Item 79, p. 24.

[39] Operations Record Book No. 5 Squadron RAAF (Bougainville), 21 March 1945, microfilm copy RAAF Historical and Archives, Canberra.

Consequently Mitchell would be remaining as the Air Commander in the Northern Solomons for a while yet. After this the RAAF and RNZAF would take over, although he was not sure of exactly when this would happen. "Your squadrons", he assured Isitt, "are doing a splendid job and the Aussies, essentially with New Zealand air support, have moved along on their clean up job rather faster than I had anticipated". Mitchell agreed that momentarily there was "a bit of personnel redundancy", especially among those New Zealanders waiting to take over from the Marine airmen. However, he could see no alternative but to retain them even though they were not very busy, because no one was sure exactly when the takeover would be.[40]

We hope our RNZAF Fighter Squadrons will find an adequate role with the RAAF Task Force.

(Air Commodore Arthur Nevill, March 1945)

After careful consideration, Nevill informed Jones on 20 March that the most effective and economical employment for New Zealand squadrons after the completion of the Northern Solomons campaign would be as a self-contained portion of the RAAF Task Force to be assigned operations in Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies. It had been decided that too much time would be lost in conversion training and re-organisation if RNZAF Corsair squadrons were to be employed on British Pacific Fleet carriers, even if the squadrons did become available when they were required. Employment with the Australians, on the other hand, would involve a continuation of the role in which these squadrons have been so effectively employed. This would only involve New Zealand fighter squadrons and there appeared to be no further need for the four existing bomber-reconnaissance squadrons anywhere else in the Pacific. This was not crucial, however, as they were still required in their present employment for some time yet. This work could still be easily done with their present aircraft and, therefore, these could be kept and additional transport aircraft requested, which would be required to support units moved forward, instead of the new model Ventura. Nevill calculated that the difference in price between the two types would also save the country something like £1½ million. Employment with the RAAF had already been discussed unofficially with Bostock, but Nevill now hoped to have War

[40] Mitchell to Isitt, 14 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/9.

Cabinet authorisation for official discussions with Bostock and Kenney. "The above proposals", Nevill assured Jones, "would result in the establishment of a more compact force; effect considerable monetary savings as regards lend-lease charges; and, furthermore, it would result in economies in man-power in 1946."[41]

In November 1944, Pirie had warned Isitt that the role of New Zealand's bomber-reconnaissance squadrons was far from satisfactory and their retention was not justified. Isitt had replied that he was exploring every possibility of an active role, but until this happened his main problem was to keep the RNZAF's forces intact and efficient so as to be in a position to move forward whenever the opportunity arose. Now Nevill was arguing that there was no further role for this type of squadron anywhere in the Pacific, and in view of the country's manpower difficulties and the fact that it was unlikely that New Zealand would get any strike aircraft such as the Mitchell, they should be phased out rather than replaced. "It is obvious", Nevill told Clark-Hall, "that our existing organisation in the Islands will steadily become far too large for our commitments which, by the end of the year, should be extremely small."[42]

In discussions with Walter Nash, the new South Pacific Commander, Vice-Admiral William L. Calhoun, who had previously been Commander of the United States Pacific Fleet's Service Fleet, stated that his directive was now to "roll up" the South Pacific Area as soon as he could. Calhoun, whom Alister McIntosh described as "somewhat of a light-weight", had just inspected Tonga and decided that all facilities were to be withdrawn and Suva had already been closed down except for two airfields at Nadi and Narewa which the United States Transport Command would continue to operate.[43] Naval facilities in the New Hebrides were also being withdrawn and would probably be moved up to Manus. Calhoun paid warm tribute to all ranks of the RNZAF, but declined to make any forecast of probable future employment for New Zealand forces. The United States, he told Nash, was becoming increasingly concerned with food supplies for forces in the Pacific. It had been expected that an end to the war in Europe would free additional supplies for the Pacific, but it was now

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[41] Nevill to Jones, "Royal New Zealand Air Force: Future Role and Equipment", 20 March 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.
[42] NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 17-18.
[43] McIntosh to Berendsen, 9 June 1943, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, p. 26.

being realised that a very large supply would be needed for the newly liberated countries. Admiral Nimitz reiterated that he needed all the food that New Zealand could supply and added that he wanted this kept a United States Navy responsibility carried out solely through the Joint Purchasing Board in New Zealand. He stressed that no notice whatsoever should be taken of representations by visiting United States Army officers, no matter what their rank. Nash assured the two Americans that New Zealand's production programme was currently under review and the country was short of both freezing and dehydrating equipment, but the government wanted to continue doing as much as it could, both militarily and industrially.[44] In the meantime, if there was no further business in Wellington, Calhoun told Nash, "I'm just going to Auckland and Rotorua and take it very easy and enjoy your lovely country, the people and the climate".[45]

While Isitt was also in Rotorua undergoing treatment for a stiff neck resulting from "an old war injury", Nevill was occupied with civil aviation. He did not feel completely au fait with developments in the Islands, but Nevill was convinced that changes in the existing organisation of Islands Group and the New Zealand Air Task Force were necessary to conform with changes taking place in the Pacific. Isitt felt that a suitable time would come when Mitchell and the First Marine Air Wing left Bougainville, at which time New Zealand could transfer its entire headquarters to Bougainville. With this not now expected to happen for some time, it appeared that steps would have to be taken before then. It was anticipated that as New Zealand squadrons became spare upon the completion of the Bougainville and Bismarck Archipelago campaigns, hopefully by September or October, they would be employed in operations with the RAAF Task Force. "We hope", said Nevill, "that our RNZAF Fighter Squadrons will find an adequate role with the RAAF Task Force, and steps are being taken towards this end." If this became the case, there would be no need for a self-contained operational headquarters, except for any "residual responsibilities" New Zealand might be forced to accept in the rear areas. Unfortunately there appeared to be few opportunities anywhere in the Pacific for New Zealand's bomber-

[44] Meeting with Admiral Calhoun and Admiral Nimitz, 18 April 1945, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, SHA/3/030.
[45] Calhoun to Nash, 29 May 1945, NANZ EA1 59/3/97-1.

reconnaissance squadrons, but it was hoped that the flying-boat squadrons would continue to be needed for rescue work with the RAAF.[46]

It appeared to Nevill that the RNZAF had two choices. The first would be to transfer No. 1 (Islands) Group into the South-West Pacific, preferably at Bougainville, or secondly, the New Zealand Air Task Force could be made independent of Islands Group and responsible for its own administration and logistics. Islands Group would then be reduced in status to a base depot, probably based at Espiritu Santo and responsible for the administration of the Stores Depot at Guadalcanal, and any New Zealand units remaining in the South Pacific Area. Any such change would have to be discussed with Calhoun, however Nevill was in favour of the second option which, he believed, would allow for a smoother transition, and also retain the name, New Zealand Air Task Force (COMZEAIRTAF), which he felt had considerable merit.[47]

The problem, Isitt explained from the air force convalescent depot in Rotorua, was that the New Zealand government would not approve General Kenney to find employment for RNZAF squadrons. He felt that the government's attitude was: "if they do not want them they need not have them", and the manpower situation was now such that the War Cabinet would welcome any excuse to reduce the number of RNZAF squadrons in the Pacific. Isitt was in favour of Bostock's plan and felt sure that the government would agree, but it would have to come as a request and in "strong terms". The whole future role of the RNZAF was now under consideration by the government, along with the vexed question of New Zealand manpower, including the future of 2 Division, and the Prime Minister intended to raise these issues again in London.[48] As Isitt explained to Bostock, he was keen for any squadrons surplus to requirements in the Northern Solomons to be made available to RAAF Command for operations and, he emphasised, "if it reached my government as a request I am sure they would agree". Perhaps Bostock could even arrange for the Australian Minister in London and his staff to be given information on the advantages of this proposal in case they were asked about it by the British Chiefs of Staff. Isitt was sure that this was Kenney's intention for the RNZAF's future employment, and he was only

[46] Nevill to Clark-Hall, 21 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.
[47] ibid., No. 1 (Islands) Group was eventually disbanded 31 July 1945.
[48] Isitt to Clark-Hall, 22 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

anticipating it a little. He also hoped that all the remaining New Zealand squadrons could be transferred after the completion of the Northern Solomons operations.[49]

Future plans for service in the Pacific might also include those New Zealand personnel presently in Europe. However, although the war was progressing well there, Isitt felt he was not receiving results fast enough to make such plans accurately. "As you know full well", he confided to Goddard, "the RNZAF is dispersed all over the world today, but I feel and hope that when the campaign in Germany is over, the bulk of the RNZAF will be either in South-East Asia Command, or serving in the Pacific with the Australians." In view of the number of Japanese in Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies, Isitt expected that these campaigns would present a sizeable task for the Australian forces for some time. "I am looking forward to the time", he told Goddard, "when it will be possible to assure some co-ordination of drives made by British forces based on Australia and those made from [South-East Asia]. I hope one day we will manage to join forces on the China Coast."[50]

Isitt was sure that the New Zealand government would prefer to have New Zealand personnel serving against Japan in Asia and the Pacific after the end of hostilities in Europe, rather than remaining with the occupation forces there. It was proposed that two New Zealand Mosquito squadrons be allocated to South-East Asia Command. Isitt estimated that of approximately 4,500 New Zealand aircrew currently serving in various capacities with the RAF, about 2,000 would be eligible, and willing, to transfer to Asia to join the 350 New Zealanders already there. In view of these increased numbers, he told Goddard, New Zealand would feel entitled to some credit, preferably in the form of more squadrons organised on the same basis as the original Article XV Squadrons. These squadrons would represent New Zealand in South-East Asia until the end of the war there and, ultimately, in whatever British organisation would fight the war in China.[51]

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[49] Isitt to Bostock, 22 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.
[50] Isitt to Goddard, 23 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3.
[51] ibid.

We are struggling on in the South-West Pacific.
(Air Vice Marshal Leonard Isitt, April 1945)

One of the difficulties Clark-Hall was experiencing at Islands Group was the separation of the administrative from the operational control of the great number of RNZAF squadrons. By operational control, he did not mean the day-to-day work, but operational policy, "inasfar as there can be any", short of the Air Department. The fact that the Americans and Australians departed from this principle and separated the two functions did not impress Sir Robert very much who remained in favour of the principles used by the British and German forces. The Americans, he told Nevill, "largely due to unlimited manpower and equipment, manage somehow to do marvels, but their organisation in many ways is far from impressive or efficient." While in Brisbane, he had gained the impression that the RAAF did not like the separation either, but were able to make it work because they all know each other so well. The way it worked at present, he felt, was "as though General Montgomery were just to signal his administrative staff some hundreds of miles away: 'propose to throw three armies across the Rhine on Saturday, 24 March. Please arrange for necessary bridges and supplies.' - and then go to bed." The matter was now further complicated by the fact that, owing to the delay in General Mitchell turning over air command of the Northern Solomons to the Commander of the New Zealand Air Task Force (Roberts), there was no New Zealander short of Isitt who could communicate with General Kenney.[52]

The New Zealand and American command structures in the area were causing increasing frustrations. For example, the RNZAF Ventura squadron at Guadalcanal, which was no longer required operationally, was ordered to go to Los Negros, in the Admiralty Islands, where it was also not wanted. Neither Roberts nor Clark-Hall could approach Kenney to point this out and, while Mitchell could, Clark-Hall felt that he was not sufficiently interested in the subject to take much trouble. Islands Group also currently had fighter squadrons at Guadalcanal and Espiritu Santo under orders to move to Bougainville and Green Island. Unfortunately there was no shipping available until mid-June by which time there would be no requirement for these squadrons and all the labour required to move them would be wasted. When

[52] Clark-Hall to Nevill, 26 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

Clark-Hall had asked for a little time to prepare a camp and facilities for the first squadron to arrive at Green, he was given the impression that the Americans found him too fussy, even though he knew they would never move one of their own squadrons without proper arrangements unless it was urgently required.[53]

Clark-Hall was anxious to return to New Zealand and believed that the most correct and simple arrangement would be to merge Islands Group into the RNZAF Task Force and have Roberts take over operational control. This would put him in charge of both operations and administration and in direct communication with Kenney. Clark-Hall agreed with Nevill that it should remain the New Zealand Air Task Force and the misleading title 'Group' should be dropped. Unfortunately, this would not now be happening until July by which time the RNZAF hoped to have squadrons under Australian command in Borneo, and Bougainville would be an entirely unsuitable location for New Zealand's Pacific headquarters. Any change of location, however, would take a long time to receive Kenney's approval and then achieve so the air force had to try to decide where the new headquarters should be (possibly Los Negros or Green Island) and be prepared to move as quickly as possible. There would for some time yet remain four fairly large units in the South Pacific Area at Guadalcanal, Halavo, Espiritu Santo and Segond and according to Clark-Hall these too would be much better run from a single New Zealand task force rather than from a separate headquarters or, even worse, from Wellington.[54]

Until a solution was found, misunderstandings continued and Clark-Hall had to complain when MacArthur signalled him to move Number 1 Servicing Unit from Guadalcanal to Los Negros just after General Kenney had told him to prepare to move them to Green Island. Shipping, water, roads and a camp were all being prepared at Green, but Clark-Hall had a strong suspicion that Kenney had forgotten to mention it to MacArthur. Now he was faced with the possibility of having to move 300 men to a place with no facilities. "Of course, if they were going into battle, or to do a real job", he explained to Nevill, "this wouldn't matter. There would be loud cheers from everyone, and they would sleep on the ground, eat nothing but bully beef, go without baths, and be perfectly happy. When that is not the case, and if they are not wanted to

[53] ibid.
[54] ibid.

do a real job, the effect on morale is extremely bad." As the Guadalcanal Headquarters operations records book comments: "inactivity in this climate appears to be very unpopular with all ranks".[55] In any event, the mistake would probably be discovered and rectified and probably no shipping would be available anyway. As for the matter of the RAAF, Bostock told Clark-Hall that he felt it would be improper for him to raise with Kenney the issue of an RNZAF wing in Borneo until RNZAF squadrons were already officially under his operational command. Isitt, on the other hand, was still waiting for a request from Bostock "in strong terms" to present to his government so it was unclear who would make the next move.[56]

Roberts reassured Clark-Hall from Bougainville that his squadrons were happy and he was trying to keep them as informed as possible about what was happening. It was, he agreed, an "operational muddle" and he felt inclined to title his reports: "The Trials, Troubles and Tribulations of ZEAIRTAF". Both Roberts and Mitchell had received conflicting signals from MacArthur and Kenney, and Mitchell had agreed to a dispatch to Kenney asking for an idea of his future intentions for the area. The situation, Roberts hoped, would become clearer in April when the Second Australian Corps was due to assume certain logistic support for RNZAF units at Green, Emirau, and Bougainville, and the RAAF was due to establish an operational base at Jacquinot Bay. At the same time, however, General Mitchell, who was expecting to receive a new appointment soon, informed Roberts that the First Marine Aircraft Wing Headquarters and Marine Air Group 61 were not now due to move further north until as late as August or even September. "Personally", Roberts confided to Clark-Hall, "I think MacArthur is 'dropping our anchor' for us and that we will ultimately be forced to see out the Bougainville campaign and then sort out our affairs with the RAAF as to employment of our squadrons with them at Jacquinot Bay or further West." The outlook seemed to be yet more garrison work.[57]

Back in Wellington, Isitt joked that his injury was much improved; it was not serious, but remained "a pain in the neck". He had just asked Kenney to agree to the release of four fighter squadrons for employment with either the Australians or the British Pacific Fleet. Once this was agreed to, he planned to meet with Bostock to

[55] Guadalcanal Headquarters Operations Record Book, 11 May 1945, NANZ Air 202/1.
[56] Clark-Hall to Nevill, 28 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

sort out the remaining problems. One difficulty that would remain was the Ventura squadrons. He could see no further employment for them after the end of 1945 and had cancelled orders for the new model. Neither the RAAF Task Force nor the British Pacific Fleet could see employment for these squadrons and Isitt was loath to involve them in an American area completely divorced from other RNZAF units. One possibility appeared to be to use the personnel to man additional transport squadrons which could be trained in supply and support of ground forces. The New Zealanders found it "annoying" that they could not obtain more definite information of Kenney's intentions and Isitt, especially, felt that the RNZAF's problems were not fully appreciated by the general's staff. However, he knew that Kenney would not accept an RNZAF liaison officer while they remained operating under General Mitchell. Roberts could still make representations to Kenney through Mitchell, and Isitt could go to him directly, yet they were both anxious for the New Zealand Air Task Force to assume operational responsibility for the area and become realigned under RAAF command. This would go a long way towards clearing up the current administrative and command difficulties.[58]

Isitt was now thrown into further uncertainty by the news that the RNZAF would not be receiving any more Corsairs after June due to the increased tempo of carrier and Marine fighter operations, with resulting high losses. He had been offered the American SB2C Helldiver in lieu, but did not like it at all. Isitt was hurriedly trying to clarify the situation and was signalling Findlay in Washington, as well as Bostock, Kenney, Portal and Evill looking for an alternative. Allocations up until June would be enough to keep RNZAF Corsair squadrons operating until the end of 1945, but Isitt feared that this new development could have far-reaching effects on New Zealand's future roles. MacArthur's headquarters in Leyte informed the War Department that Corsairs would be necessary for the RNZAF to continue its work in the Northern Solomons and to change aircraft type at this stage would require the establishment of new stocks of supplies, the transition of pilots and re-training of gunners and ground crews. Admiral King's air staff replied, however, that there was a critical shortage of Corsairs in the operational areas while the RNZAF was in an area

[57] Roberts to Clark-Hall, 31 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

with no enemy air opposition and did not require first-line fighters. The Helldiver was considered suitable for ground support and dive-bombing operations and it was not felt that re-training and re-equipping would be an insurmountable task.[59]

Roberts hoped that representatives of the staffs of MacArthur, Kenney, and Mitchell, as well as the RNZAF, RAAF, and Australian Army could all meet to sort out the whole area permanently and he remained confident that this could be done. In the meantime, he was pushing General Mitchell as hard as he could for decisions and information, and was keeping both MacArthur and Kenney's staffs fully informed on the disposition of New Zealand squadrons. To Roberts it appeared that the cause of the trouble had been that, because of the swift progress of the war, the headquarters of the two generals had been "strewn out all over the Pacific from Brisbane to Manila, causing complete lack of co-ordination of anything". Although, he confided to Clark-Hall, "I have a feeling that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock is more in the background of this business than we know".[60]

On 23 April, the last American combat units in South Pacific Area were decommissioned. On the same day, Isitt explained to the General Officer Commanding, First Australian Army, Lieutenant-General Vernon Sturdee, that the proposed change of operational control of the RNZAF from Kenney to Bostock had been delayed yet again. Isitt had just had a very complementary message from General Savige and did not feel that the situation was affecting co-operation with the Second Australian Corps, but it was having an adverse effect on future planning, particularly in employment of forces. Isitt was having utmost difficulty in planning for future requirements in the area, and at the same time in considering the re-arming of the fighter squadrons, because he could obtain no definite information on the intentions of either Kenney or Sturdee. If the RNZAF moved further forces forward to Bougainville, it would be over-established for the task currently at hand, unless they were immediately to embark on operations in New Britain, which did not appear

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[58] Isitt to Clark-Hall, (no date) March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4; also Isitt to Kenney, 13 March 1945, NANZ Air 100/9.

[59] Isitt to Clark-Hall, (no date) March 1945, NANZ Air 100/4; War Diary of the South Pacific Commander, 11 April 1945, and "Employment of New Zealand Fighter Squadrons to Support Operations in the Solomons" OPD 452.1 SWPA, 21 April 1945, NARA R.G. 165, Entry 418, Box 980.

[60] Roberts to Clark-Hall, 1 April 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

to be the Australian plan. The best solution would be for these extra forces to be moved forward to take part in the OBOE operations as soon as possible.[61]

The Combined Chiefs of Staff had also considered the proposal that the Netherlands East Indies come under the control of South-East Asia Command, and this had now been referred back to London for British and Commonwealth opinion. Isitt was not sure what the effect of this would be, but believed that it would be in the best interest of Australia and New Zealand. In the meantime, he explained to Goddard, "we are struggling on" in the South-West Pacific. Isitt believed that his squadrons in the South-West Pacific were doing a good job and forging good relations with the Australian Military Forces and, to a lesser extent with the RAAF. Unfortunately he was meeting some resistance from the American commanders in his efforts to free these squadrons for service in Borneo. Much as the New Zealanders liked General Mitchell, the chain of command through him to Kenney was too cumbersome and "not very happy". Isitt was now most anxious to come directly under Kenney as soon as possible, either with full responsibility for operations or in conjunction with the RAAF Task Force. There was no difficulty in day-to-day operations, he told Goddard, but he felt that neither Kenney nor Mitchell was taking a sufficiently wide view in planning and too much strength was being retained in the rear areas.[62]

After considering the reorganisation of command in South-West Pacific, the Joint Staff Planners in Washington concluded on 12 May that it was both militarily desirable and the time was propitious to transfer at least part of the area to British command. This would be especially so as the United States Chiefs of Staff had decided that "all other Allied forces (except United States) will remain in the area when the United States gives it up".[63] Following full discussions with Roberts and Mitchell, Nevill recommended to Isitt that the New Zealand Air Task Force should be established as a separate command within South-West Pacific Area and the minimum logistic and administrative staff provided as soon as possible. In Nevill's view, this would facilitate planning and forward moves, and simplify the existing logistic and

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[61] Isitt to Sturdee, 23 April 1945, NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3; War Diary of the South Pacific Commander 23 April 1945.

[62] Isitt to Sturdee, 23 April 1945, and Isitt to Goddard, 27 April 1945, both NANZ Air 100/13 vol. 3.

administrative work within the area. No. 1 (Islands) Group would remain with a reduced staff during the transition period and possibly until the last operational RNZAF squadrons were transferred out of the South Pacific Area.[64]

Clark-Hall remained adamant that the division of the area into two groups and the separation of Guadalcanal and Espiritu Santo from the New Zealand Air Task Force, even if only for a short interim period, was unsound in principle. Moreover, it would be extravagant in personnel and difficult to make work. Nevill regarded these as lesser matters compared to the need to move staff to Bougainville as soon as possible. He admitted to Isitt that he found it difficult to understand Clark-Hall's arguments which he felt were based on "rather obscure personal issues". Clark-Hall doubted whether Roberts had any idea of the logistic and administrative problems involved and there was a feeling that Roberts was being a bit of a salesman and over-emphasising the operational side of things. Nevill was concerned, however, that it would not have been practical to merge No. 1 (Islands) Group with the Task Force command where staff had to be kept at a minimum until the changeover from American command happened (whenever this might be). Furthermore, while relations between the New Zealand Task Force and the Australians were going unexpectedly well, and the Americans regarded Roberts very highly, General Kenney was inclined to ignore No. 1 (Islands) Group in his signals and Mitchell regarded it as "an unnecessary cog in the wheels".[65]

The RNZAF's Pacific commands were restructured over the following month so that the New Zealand Air Task Force would assume all command and administration in the Northern Solomons, Bismarck Archipelago, and Admiralty Islands area. This would be exercised under the operational direction of the American Northern Solomons Command and later under the RAAF. It was anticipated that this organisation would remain in effect as long as it was required for operations in this area, but ultimately the formation of two wings under RAAF Command was expected. When this happened, the New Zealand Task Force command would be reduced in status or replaced by two wing headquarters and until this happened it was

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[63] "Reorganisation of Command in the SWPA", J.P.S. 671/1 12 May 1945, NARA, R.G. 165, Entry 421, Box 176, File ABC 323.31 Pacific Ocean Area. (Appendix A.).
[64] Nevill to Air Department, 18 May 1945, NANZ Air 1 131/1/15.
[65] Clark-Hall to Air Department, 18 May 1945; Nevill to Isitt, 18 May 1945, NANZ Air 1 131/1/15.

recommended that senior New Zealand staff gain as much experience as possible in working with Australian commands. No. 1 (Islands) Group staff would be progressively reduced, but would retain responsibility for the command and administration of all RNZAF units in the Southern Solomons and New Hebrides area. Its function would be primarily that of base and support area and lines of communication for the New Zealand Task Force and other RNZAF formations that might eventually be formed. Fiji and Norfolk Island would continue to function as separate units under the direct administration of the Air Department in Wellington.[66]

The RNZAF would hold its own with any manpower racket in the history of this war.

(B. K. Connolly, May 1945)

On 18 May, Walter Nash, who was Acting-Prime Minister during Peter Fraser's absence in London, was warned by the editor of the *New Zealand Truth*, B. K. Connolly, that morale in the RNZAF was at a very low ebb. The *Truth's* war correspondent in the Pacific, Trevor Lane, had had discussions with RNZAF personnel at various stations throughout the Pacific and was left with the clear impression that this would remain so unless these men could be convinced that they were serving some useful purpose in what they were doing. Connolly had also found amongst the RNZAF in New Zealand the feeling that the air force was "operating in sufferance both with respect to the Americans and the Australians", and was sure that this attitude came from personnel returning home, and writing home, from the Pacific. Lane had found that at every Pacific air force base the men were asking the same question: "what are we doing here?" The query was strongest at Fiji, Espiritu Santo and Guadalcanal, and less so at Bougainville, Green Island and Emirau. Even here, though, the feeling persisted that the United States had washed its hands of the New Zealand set-up in the Pacific and did not want the RNZAF there. Lane also formed the impression that at all stations below Guadalcanal, those in authority were struggling to justify their station's existence and instituting programmes such as a jungle-training school at Espiritu Santo to occupy manpower.[67]

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[66] Administrative Instruction Number 86/1945, "RNZAF - Reorganisation, Pacific Commands" , 29 May 1945, NANZ Air 1 131/1/15.

[67] Connolly to Nash, 18 May 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

Lane believed that maintaining discipline in the rear areas was becoming increasingly difficult and cited the example of a sit-down strike at Santo by one thousand men which had paralysed the station for several days in March. The situation was exacerbated by the poor quality of the men's rations which were not being adequately supplemented with fresh fruit and vegetables from New Zealand. The Medical Officer at Emirau, for example, reported that the men were living out of tins and their health could not be maintained in that climate unless rationing was improved. There was plenty of refrigeration on the islands, but a lack of regular shipping service between them and New Zealand. Lane reported that a "hopelessly inadequate" air service was endeavouring to deal with the problem along with the delivery of personal papers, letters and parcels which were extremely important "on these Godforsaken islands".[68]

There was concern that an 18 month service scheme had been introduced for groundcrew because it would not be practical to replace them every 12 months once the air force moved further north into the Pacific. Firstly, it seemed unfair to apply this to men who were already overseas on duty, and secondly, now that this forward move appeared unlikely to happen, many resented the extra period they would have to serve. Particularly bitter were trained tradesmen who wanted to be home helping the country in their own skilled trades. "If there is anything we are doing here that will help shorten the war by one day", Lane was told on Santo, "we would be happy to do it, BUT WE ARE NOT."[69]

Earlier, in February, a number of air force personnel had presented a petition to the Commander of the New Zealand Air Task Force in which they argued that an arbitrary attitude was being assumed that was calculated to weaken morale. "At the moment", they wrote, "we are 'garrison troops'. We don't share the discomforts and dangers of combat conditions but we miss the exciting activity that prevents introversion, brooding and self-pity. You will concede that morale is often the factor which determines whether or not a ground support is a solid, reliable force. Under conditions here, we are more liable to 'slip' - let things pass - than we would be in any other area." These men were well aware that the manpower shortage was now acute,

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[68] ibid.
[69] ibid.

and at a time when they felt under-employed wondered if they were all really making a valid contribution to the war effort. It seemed to them that as soon as all personnel in any section were fully employed and working hard, the old cry for more staff would go up and the wastage would continue. "We're willing to work long hours, and cheerfully too. But while so many of us cannot get a job to do, even the extension of the tour seems unwarranted."[70]

Connolly continued to receive numerous letters from returned servicemen and their families that the RNZAF would "hold its own with any manpower racket in the history of this war". One writer, for example, signing under the nom-de-plume of "disgusted airman", asked why the RNZAF had nearly doubled in size in the 12 months since being left behind on garrison duty in the Pacific. During this period, the writer estimated that the RNZAF had lost a large number of Corsairs and Venturas, costing the country millions of pounds for aircraft alone not including loss of life and aircraft maintenance. At the same time, they had not seen a single Japanese aircraft, ship or submarine. All this effort had achieved was to kill a thousand or so Japanese on the ground, destroy a few stores, and riddle a few fishing craft. As far as this writer was concerned there were only two possible explanations. Firstly, that the RNZAF was being built up with the expectation of a new assignment or, secondly, that it was a scam to maintain an over-sized air force.[71]

The first option was obviously not going to happen and many had gained the impression that now the Americans did not want them, the Chief of Air Staff was trying to get them something to do in the forward area and "after hawking the RNZAF all over the Pacific, he wanted us to be good chaps and not bitch too much about the only jobs he could find for us to do". As for the second explanation, this airman felt that the only way the RNZAF could avoid substantial reductions in number was to form new units and send them up to the islands even though there was nothing for them to do. As a result, servicemen in the islands were becoming disgruntled and jobs and opportunities in New Zealand were being taken by others. Connolly stressed to Nash that while New Zealand's obligations to its allies demanded that the country do its part in the war against Japan, New Zealanders still needed to be convinced that

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[70] Memo to Unit Personnel Services Officer, Field Headquarters Bougainville, 26 February 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

each service was really doing necessary work. Connolly was aware of a strong feeling in the country that many RNZAF personnel would be better employed in essential industry in New Zealand or in another service. This matter would become even more important as the government considered sending a token land force into the Pacific.[72]

To make matters worse, New Zealand newspapers reaching the Pacific were causing increased resentment among New Zealand servicemen. A leading article in the *New Zealand Herald* of 21 June, for example, described RNZAF operational news despatches as "propaganda" and claimed they were "designed to prove the essential nature of the role of the RNZAF in the South-West Pacific". RNZAF establishments in the Pacific, the paper argued, had become "swollen beyond reason" with unnecessary wastage caused by two headquarters and large numbers of men simply wasting the country's money and manpower on unessential work. Group Captain Roberts warned that the editor of the *Herald* might be advised to board up his front window against servicemen returning from the Pacific after they saw themselves described as "deadweight". It was a "scandalous state of affairs", Roberts argued, because these officers and men "rightly feel that they are doing everything they can to help beat the enemy in a combat area under conditions which are arduous and trying. They feel that they are entitled to some credit and some gratitude, instead of a tirade of abuse." Servicemen's families too expressed their resentment and did not feel they should have to apologise, instead of feeling pride, for family members overseas. Roberts felt that the *Herald's* most enthusiastic supporters would certainly be the Japanese "who would undoubtedly give much to see the weight and strength of the RNZAF in this area curtailed or eliminated".[73]

In reply, Nevill informed Nash and the government that the length of tour would be being progressively increased because of a lack of sufficient technical personnel to permit a more frequent rotation. He did not feel that this constituted a hardship, however, especially when compared to the tours of duty of Australian and American personnel in the area. No airman would be affected until June 1946 and in the unlikely event of the RNZAF not moving forward, it would not be necessary to increase the tour. As for the jungle-training at Espiritu Santo and in New Zealand,

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[71] Connolly to Nash and attached letter by "Disgusted Airman", 30 May 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.
[72] ibid.

this was considered necessary for all personnel to be located in areas not fully supported by the army. Moreover, its main purpose was to acclimatise servicemen to Pacific conditions. Nevill admitted that the food had deteriorated at some stations when the RNZAF transferred from American to Australian rations which were below the standard to which RNZAF personnel had become accustomed. Every endeavour was now being made though to improve this by supplementation from New Zealand, and he was trying to secure the services of a ship from the government for this.[74]

As for the letter from the "disgusted airman", Nevill argued that this writer had failed to understand that the air force had changed from air combat to close support of army forces. RNZAF losses over this period were about a third of what he had claimed, and as far as the army commanders were concerned, the results had been well worthwhile. In general, Nevill felt that the views expressed by Connolly and the other writers indicated fairly the opinions held by a certain proportion of serving personnel, even though they were based on erroneous facts and inferences. "The average New Zealander in the forces", he told Nash, "is intelligent and critical and is perhaps less inclined to accept the uncertainties of modern war than others." Efforts were being made to keep servicemen reasonably informed through their officers, but this was hampered by "the recent lack of any clear-cut policy on future employment". This, Nevill hoped, would be clarified shortly and then steps could be taken to ensure that the activities of the air force were more fully disseminated throughout the service.[75]

The Government sought further assurance that New Zealand military personnel were employed to best advantage in the war against Japan as it again considered allocations between the three services. Isitt asked General Sturdee, General Kenney and Admiral Calhoun whether RNZAF personnel were employed in an essential role, and whether it could be forecast when these personnel could be released for other duties. Sturdee replied that the operations of the First Australian Army in New Britain and the Northern Solomon Islands were entirely dependent on RNZAF support, and all squadrons were "fully employed on an essential work". Sturdee argued that he could not predict exactly when RNZAF personnel could be released but, as this would seriously jeopardise Australian army operations, he could

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[73] Roberts to Air Department, 6 July 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.
[74] Nevill to Nash "Press Publicity", 14 June 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

not consider any reduction before the end of December 1945. Similarly Kenney replied that all RNZAF squadrons in the South-West Pacific were assigned "important operational roles" in direct support of the Australian ground forces. Furthermore, Kenney said, it was his intention to move these squadrons forward to the Netherlands East Indies "immediately upon their release from the mission of direct support of the Land Forces in the Bismarcks area, as shipping becomes available". In view of this, RNZAF squadrons could not be released unless they were replaced by other similar Allied squadrons of which none were available either now or in the near future.[76]

As Isitt told the government, he had to assume that RNZAF operational commitments would not be reduced until the defeat of Japan, and he was working on an "assumed victory date" of June 1947. "Taking all circumstances into consideration", Isitt said, "I feel it is a reasonable and justifiable risk to assume that the war will finish on or before June 1947." On this basis, flying training schools and their supporting units would be progressively reduced to a minimum level by July 1946 and operational training units by December 1946. As various types of training for the RNZAF took approximately 18 months, if the war finished before June 1947, considerable surpluses of partially trained aircrew were inevitable. On the other hand, if the war continued beyond this date, the RNZAF would be unable to support the squadrons overseas.[77]

Although it was likely to be unpopular within New Zealand, the war cabinet also began discussing the possible role of New Zealand land forces against Japan after the end of the European conflict. If a land force was considered necessary, it was decided here too that the preference would be to serve under British command in South-East Asia, or with the Australians. However, when the subject of manpower once more came up, Isitt assured Fraser that while the RNZAF was considerable in numbers, no material assistance could be given to the army unless its whole Pacific organisation was disbanded. This would yield 6,000 men, but these could not be provided immediately since it would be necessary to gain the formal approval of the

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[75] ibid.

[76] Copies of Isitt to Sturdee, 25 June 1945; Sturdee to Isitt, 30 June 1945; Isitt to Kenney, 25 June 1945; Kenney to Isitt, 26 June 1945; Isitt to Calhoun, 27 June 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

[77] Isitt to Chairman Defence Forces Personnel Committee, 11 June 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-2b, and Isitt to Jones, "RNZAF Manning Programme in Relation to End of War", 6 June 1945, NANZ EA W2619 87/4/10 part 1.

Combined Chiefs of Staff to release New Zealand's squadrons and this could take some time. Moreover, there would be serious organisational difficulties with the numbers of these men who held rank within the RNZAF which they would have to give up to go into the army. In the meantime, the war cabinet decided not to cut down the air effort, and Nash suggested to Fraser that the air force "seems to be needed and to be reasonably well employed".[78]

On 5 June 1945, Isitt discussed the future of the RNZAF with the Chiefs of Staff Committee. At that time, the RNZAF had a strength of 22,040 involved in training, supply and administrative support in New Zealand and 8,617 in the Pacific. The RNZAF consisted of:

10 fighter squadrons
(8 on operations and 2 on training and leave in New Zealand)
4 bomber-reconnaissance squadrons
(3 on operations and 1 on training and leave in New Zealand)
2 transport squadrons on operations based in New Zealand
2 flying-boat squadrons on operations.

This made a total of 18 squadrons as well as stores, administration, and other operational support units in New Zealand and the Pacific. Isitt proposed that after the move to the Netherlands East Indies, some reorganisation would be necessary so that by July 1946 the RNZAF would consist of 17 squadrons. There would be the same number of fighter and flying-boat squadrons, but bomber-reconnaissance squadrons would be reduced to only one while transport squadrons were increased to four. There could be a reduction of training staff in New Zealand, but Isitt was still not in favour of reducing overseas numbers.[79]

Bostock now informed Isitt that since the New Zealand Air Task Force was to be supplemented to permit complete command rather than just operational command, he hoped to allocate the entire area a New Zealand responsibility within the RAAF Command and exercise broad operational control from his headquarters. He would then place Australian units in the area under the direct operational command of the New Zealand Task Force Command under the same basic arrangements as still existed

[78] Nash to Fraser, 9 June 1945, cited in Wood, pp. 295-296.
[79] Isitt to Secretary Chiefs of Staff Committee, 5 June 1945, cited in NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 22-23.

under American command. Bostock also hoped to be able to allot a self-contained New Zealand Corsair wing "as an integral part of my First Tactical Air Force". New Zealand would retain domestic administration and responsibility for "non-common supply", and be requested to place staff representatives at Bostock's headquarters.[80]

Isitt spent 18 days in the Pacific during which he travelled over 14,000 miles visiting as many of the stations where New Zealand units were established as he could. The administrative nature of his trip did not allow him to make the detailed inspections he would have liked, yet he found that his air force was fit and well catered for, and their general morale was good. In Bougainville, Jacquinot Bay, and Emirau, he was complimented on the work of RNZAF squadrons by Australian army officers. Isitt spent two days with an Australian brigade engaged with Japanese forces on the Mibo River, in the South of Bougainville, and their commanding officer assured him that the RNZAF Corsair squadrons were saving him hundreds of casualties and greatly speeding up their advance. RAAF command remained anxious to move these squadrons forward at the end of August, but shipping was going to be in extremely short supply due to the forward movement of large numbers of United States forces into Okinawa. This suited General Sturdee well as he was reluctant to lose RNZAF support in the Bismarck area.[81]

At the end of his trip, Isitt met with Kenney who agreed that the duties of the Northern Solomons Air Commander could be taken over by the Commander of the New Zealand Air Task Force as from 15 July. Roberts would then have operational direction of the RNZAF and RAAF squadrons in this area and any United States squadrons remaining. Isitt suggested to Jones that RNZAF officers should be posted to RAAF Command and RAAF officers to the New Zealand air Task Force Command and the name changed to the Australian and New Zealand Air Command. Isitt also informed Jones that the American higher command were most definite that the Japanese in all the by-passed areas must be eliminated, both to protect lines of communication during operations against Japan, and on the basis of future world security. "It is contended", he told his Defence Minister, "that to fail to do this and to allow these undefeated units to return to Japan after the war would be as unwise as to

[80] Bostock to Isitt, 8 June 1945, NANZ Air 1 131/1/15.
[81] Isitt to Jones, 2 July 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

fail to occupy the Japanese homeland." Kenney also informed Isitt that it now appeared definite that command of all the areas South and West of the Philippines would be transferred to the British South-East Asia Area in the near future. How this would affect future planning Isitt was unsure, but it was reasonable to expect, he felt, that it would effect a general speeding-up of operations in this area as South-East Asia Command would have less need for landing vessels and shipping which would be vital for South-West Pacific.[82]

In the meantime, Isitt cautioned Roberts against an early move of the Corsair squadrons forward to Los Negros as he did not share Robert's optimism that an early formation of an RNZAF wing there might influence the provision of earlier shipping. Isitt had just been in Manila and from his discussions there had learned that unless there was a drastic change in the situation, they had to accept that there would be no possibility of getting shipping from the Americans in South-West Pacific before the end of September. When these squadrons did go to Negros, Isitt hoped that Roberts would do his best to keep them fully employed. He had also talked to Australian officers at Jacquinot Bay who had informed him that many additional targets had now been located in and around the Rabaul area and it might be possible to employ Negros squadrons in strikes against these. Unless these squadrons could be fully employed during August and early September, he was inclined to keep the wing headquarters and squadrons to a minimum and build them up again in September before they moved forward. Isitt was aware that it might prove difficult to build them up again, but he had to do what he could to conserve personnel and tropical time, especially as Fraser was due to return to Wellington from London and the manpower question would more than likely come up again very shortly.[83]

Churchill was keen for New Zealand to participate with Commonwealth forces in operations against Japan, and suggested that the headquarters and two infantry brigades from 2 Division could take part along with RNZAF squadrons and navy ships already serving with the British Pacific Fleet. Nash felt that because of New Zealand's position as a Pacific nation, the need to maintain friendly relations with the United States, and the terms of the Canberra Agreement, the country should contribute

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[82] ibid., and Isitt to Jones "Appointment of RNZAF Staff Officers on Staff of RAAF Command", 14 July 1945, NANZ EA1 87/4/5-2b.

as much as possible. Fraser was also "fully seized of the value and importance of providing a British Commonwealth force" such as Churchill had in mind. He had no hesitation in agreeing to the use of RNZAF squadrons or Royal New Zealand Navy vessels against Japan, but would have to seek the country's approval about sending a land force as this was likely to be unpopular and difficult given the current manpower situation.[84]

On 30 July, the war cabinet considered the role of New Zealand forces to be used against Japan. Peter Fraser questioned whether the present strategy of employing forces in mopping up isolated Japanese garrisons throughout the islands was fundamentally sound. In his view, it would be better policy to defeat Japan at its heart while maintaining only minimum forces to contain these garrisons. None of the United States officers with whom the Prime Minister had discussed the war in the Pacific took much account of these minor operations and all attention was focused on the operations against Japan itself. Isitt replied that RNZAF operations were essential as they were protecting a fleet base in the Admiralties and co-operating with Australian forces in Bougainville and New Britain. When Fraser urged the withdrawal of the bomber-reconnaissance squadrons from the Pacific, Isitt argued that the withdrawal of these squadrons would, in fact, yield few men for the army because most of these men had already served reasonable periods overseas. Furthermore, he continued, such a withdrawal would have little effect on the home establishment of the RNZAF so it would be better to retain the forward operational squadrons.[85]

At their next meeting several days later, the Chiefs recommended, and the cabinet later agreed, that New Zealand's total forces overseas should be reduced to 55,000 and that the country's land, sea and air forces should participate in a Combined British Commonwealth Force for the invasion of Japan. The RNZAF would be reduced to 13,900 in New Zealand and 7,600 overseas. The 7,600 overseas would be made up of 6,500 in the Pacific and 1,100 personnel remaining with the RAF who would man 75 Squadron which would be employed with the proposed Very Long Range Commonwealth Bombing Force, as well as two squadrons on occupation duties

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[83] Isitt to Roberts, 6 July 1945, NANZ Air 100/4.

[84] Nash to Fraser, 7 April 1945; Churchill to Fraser, 5 July 1945; Fraser to Churchill, 14 July 1945; Fraser to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 4 August 1945, *Documents,* Vol. III, pp. 464-466, 488-492.

in Europe. The government approved a total of 14 squadrons (ten fighter, one flying-boat and three transport) of which one transport and eight fighter squadrons would be employed in the air element of the British Commonwealth force. Kenney was signalled in Manila on 7 August for permission to reduce the number of New Zealand squadrons in the South-West Pacific, but took no action because, unlike the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, he already knew of the atomic bomb and the surrender negotiations.[86]

On 6 August 1945, the day an American Superfortress dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were considering proposals for the reorganisation of the South-West Pacific and South-East Asia Commands. The United States Chiefs of Staff had proposed to move all resources that could be moved further forward, and then hand over South-West Pacific Area, less the Philippines and the Admiralty Island bases, to British command. British opinion, however, was growing against South-East Asia as a main theatre of operations against Japan in favour of a British Commonwealth force under MacArthur. The British government replied that while it was keen to assume responsibility for South-West Pacific Area, the proposed date, 15 August 1945, was too soon and Britain would prefer to wait until after the recapture of Singapore. After this, the Australian Chiefs of Staff could take over the area east of the Celebes, while the remainder would come under South-East Asia Command.[87]

The Australian Government essentially agreed, but felt that the United States should still provide a portion of the forces and ancillary services required to neutralise the Japanese in South-West Pacific, even after the defeat of Japan itself. Australia was prepared to reconquer New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and New Britain, except Rabaul, but was in no position to accept any further military commitments. New Zealand still had no direct responsibility for operations in the South-West Pacific, but had about 8,000 RNZAF personnel operating in support of the First Australian Army

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[85] New Zealand War Cabinet meeting, 30 July 1945, paragraphs 14-17, NANZ EA1 81/1/6.
[86] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff to Prime Minister, War Against Japan - New Zealand Forces, 2-3 August 1945, NANZ EA1 81/1/6-2, see also NANZ Air 118/81n, chapter 3, pp. 24-25. On the proposed Commonwealth force against Japan see B. Greenhous (et al.) *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Volume III*, Toronto, University of Toronto and Canadian Department of National Defence, 1994, pp. 106-124.
[87] Schedule 1 of Minutes of 147th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 6 August 1945, NANZ Air 1 105/3/3 vol. 5.

under the operational control of Kenney, now exercised through Bostock. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff supported the Australian position that the United States should retain its current logistics and supply responsibility in the area. Like Australia, New Zealand did not feel it was in a position to increase its military commitments and, indeed was even hoping to reduce RNZAF strength in the Pacific. The chiefs also felt that it should remain a matter of government policy as to whether any responsibility should be accepted for the "liquidation" of Japanese garrisons remaining in the islands of South-West Pacific and South-East Asia Commands.[88]

At the same time, New Zealand was also being asked to consider how many squadrons and staff it could provide for the proposed Commonwealth Tactical Air Force. The British Chiefs of Staff had agreed in principle to a small tactical air force of about fifteen squadrons, depending on logistic limitations, to take part in the main operations against Japan. This force would include the RNZAF, RAF, and the RAAF which would be in the majority and provide an Air Vice-Marshal as the force's commander. The rest of the staff would be Australian, New Zealand and British. The force would most likely fly American Mustang fighters which would be the most suitable for the task as well as easing logistic problems by allowing replacements and spares to be supplied through existing United States channels. [89]

This was all of little importance now, however, and the end of the war was clearly a surprise and a relief to many Japanese as well as the Allies. A New Zealand pilot on a reconnaissance flight over Rabaul reported that the main roads were crowded with vehicles and Japanese waved at aircraft which flew along the coast. Many Japanese were unconcernedly swimming. Camouflage was removed from guns, vehicles and barges, and troops moved around freely showing no sign of alarm at the approach of aircraft. Parties were seen on beaches where barges were drawn up on the shore. Offshore, idle Japanese were fishing from canoes. Some waved as New Zealand Corsairs flew overhead: "last month they would have dashed for cover on the approach of an aircraft, but now they are unconcerned," mused an RNZAF observer.

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[88] ibid.

[89] Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to New Zealand Prime Minister, 4 August 1945, NANZ EA 1 87/4/5 pt. 2.

There were stores on beaches, where the Japanese stood beside packs and rifles. Fires in other areas suggested the destruction of unwanted or immovable equipment.[90]

Following the surrender of Japanese forces, New Zealand once again looked to co-operation with Britain in the occupation of Japan and key areas of Japanese-occupied territory, the enforcement of surrender and the repatriation of prisoners of war. Britain's new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, informed the New Zealand Government that he would regard the nation's assistance as "indispensable". A British Commonwealth Force was planned to take part in the occupation of Japan and a brigade group was expected to come from New Zealand. New Zealand naval vessels would continue to be attached to the British Pacific Fleet. The RNZAF would participate in the tactical air force contingent in Japan and would also assist in enforcing the Japanese surrender in the Admiralty Islands, New Ireland, New Britain and the Solomons, and possibly Borneo.[91]

New Zealand's air staff proposed that two fighter-bomber squadrons of 24 aircraft and 400 personnel could be made available for this area and one for service in Japan. Fighter or fighter-bomber squadrons were favoured because they would require a lesser manpower commitment than other types, and spares and maintenance of Corsairs should prove less difficult than during the war. These could be used until New Zealand squadrons became equipped with the Mustang fighters which were expected by November. It was also estimated that the RNZAF would require one flying-boat squadron for search and rescue duties and some 1,200 personnel on line of communication duties which meant headquarters staff, stores depots and a transport organisation between New Zealand and the South Pacific. New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff pointed out that the ending of hostilities with Japan did not actually end the state of war and it was reasonable, they believed, that New Zealand, as a Pacific country, "should accept and share the obligations entailed in establishing the final peace in the Pacific".[92]

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[90] *The Corsair Courier* (Bougainville Newsletter), Vol. 1, No. 6, 22 August 1945, pp. 1-2, Vol. 1. No. 11, 28 August 1945, pp. 1-2, RNZAF Archives Wigram.
[91] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 208, 18 August 1945, NANZ EA1 81/4/3 pt. 5.
[92] ibid.

Conclusion:

The Pacific in New Zealand's War Effort

It is imperative to associate the United States with the British Commonwealth in the defence of the Pacific.

(New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 14 February 1946)

An American report immediately following the end of the war recognised that the United Kingdom would continue to maintain through the Colonial Office its strong interest in the security and welfare of British island possessions in the South Pacific. Both Australia and New Zealand would remain intensely proud of their separate membership in the British Commonwealth and in the international community. The two countries would continue their policies of excluding non-white immigrants and continue to assert their right to be consulted about major Pacific problems. Australia and New Zealand, the Americans felt, would follow similar foreign policies based on strong support of the United Nations as well as endeavouring to develop a joint system of regional security linked to this organisation. It was also expected that both would develop closer ties with the United States as co-operation with Britain became less intimate. The misgivings that had arisen in London and Washington over the 1944 Canberra Pact had been somewhat allayed, largely through the efforts of New Zealand statesmen to pour oil on troubled waters, nevertheless there was still concern at Dr. Evatt's pursuing of his plans for transferring British colonial territories to Australian administration.[1]

United States policy towards Australia and New Zealand would be based on the principle of maintaining the "closest ties of friendship and common interest in the Pacific". The United States would endeavour to persuade both Dominions to follow a broadly balanced post-war economic policy which would include a liberal non-discriminatory trade policy and would discourage the development of uneconomic industries in either Dominion. In its policy towards problems in the South Pacific, the United States would take part in an advisory regional commission on island welfare,

[1] *FRUS*, Volume VI 1945, pp. 574-576.

but desired chiefly to resist what it saw as Australia's expansionist tendencies from unduly complicating its relations with Britain, France and the Netherlands.[2]

The American Chargé d'Affairs in Wellington, K. S. Patton, informed the State Department that New Zealanders generally believed that because the United States would bear the burden of peace in the post-war Pacific, American views should be given precedence over those of Britain. New Zealand officials such as Carl Berendsen had told him that New Zealand would support American foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific, if it knew what American policy was. Patton suggested, therefore, that information of a general nature given by the United States to the New Zealand government would further improve relations between the two countries.[3]

Discussions between the United States and Commonwealth governments about long term American military bases in British Pacific islands also continued immediately after the war. Australia hoped to establish a strong naval and air base in the Admiralty Islands area and to see a similar base in the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides area manned by Australia, New Zealand and Britain. New Zealand considered that its base should continue to be maintained in Fiji. However, New Zealand's Chiefs of Staff reminded the government that because of a lack of resources Australia and New Zealand would be unable to provide adequate defence for the Pacific region even with the assistance of Britain. The United States would remain the paramount naval and air power in the Pacific in the post-war era and any bases established by the United States would form a "self-supporting zone which could be reduced only with the greatest difficulty ... a protective barrier for Australia and New Zealand". It was, therefore, "imperative to associate the United States with the British Commonwealth in the defence of the Pacific".[4]

Even so, suspicion of American intentions remained and the government was encouraged to resist the concession of sovereignty of British Pacific islands to the

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[2] ibid.

[3] American Chargé d'Affairs K. S. Patton to State Department, 15 October 1945, NARA R.G. 59, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 3325, File 711.47H/4-945.

[4] New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Paper 46(2) "Appreciation of the Strategical Interests of New Zealand in Certain Pacific Islands", 14 February 1946, NANZ EA1 81/4/3 pt 5. On post-war bases in the Pacific see W. D. McIntyre *Background to the ANZUS Pact: Policy-making, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1945-55*, London, St. Martin's Press, 1995, pp. 66-83. Also W. B. Harland, "New Zealand, the United States and Asia: The Background to the ANZUS Treaty", in P. Munz (ed.) *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1969, pp. 187-194.

United States. "The transfer of sovereignty to the United States, even assuming she remains a friendly power", the Chiefs of Staff argued, "may in course of time seriously limit our effective access to these islands in time of emergency". New Zealand continued to have a vital interest in New Caledonia, Fiji, and Tonga, as well as a "special military interest" in the New Hebrides, Norfolk Island, and Samoa, and defence obligations for the Cook Islands, Niue and the Tokelau Group. The Chiefs of Staff urged that New Zealand should contribute to the general defence of British interests in the Pacific, as part of a broader British Commonwealth plan. Unfortunately, while extensive American air forces remained throughout the Pacific, the RNZAF withdrawal from the Pacific (except Fiji) was now almost complete and air force demobilisation was so advanced that it would be impractical to maintain any of the above as air facilities, except Fiji, unless a new re-enlistment and training programme was introduced.[5]

An American report in September 1946 confirmed that due to demobilisation the RNZAF was, once again, "ineffective". New Zealand was not able to defend itself against air attack and would probably have to depend upon Australia, Britain, a friendly United States, and the United Nations for defence. Only two squadrons remained organised for combat; a bomber-reconnaissance squadron utilising "obsolescent" Venturas and a fighter squadron stationed on occupational duties in Japan flying "early model" Corsairs. So far no published plans existed, but it appeared likely that because of economic considerations any future air force would be a small, highly trained nucleus to serve as a basis for rapid wartime expansion. The American report acknowledged that New Zealand had good facilities for the development of air forces. It was also likely, based on the opinion of many United States Army Air Force commanders who had had New Zealand units under their command during the war, that with the same equipment and training New Zealanders would reach the same standards as American forces again. "In all phases of military operations, that is, tactics, combat, bombing, gunnery and other missions peculiar to an air force, comparison [with United States forces] should be favourable."[6]

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[5] ibid.

[6] United States Army Air Force Intelligence Report 100-81-40 "An Air Study of New Zealand", 3 September 1946, United States Air Force History Support Office, 142.048-81.

In a paper on the post-war RNZAF Air Commodore Arthur Nevill, now Vice-Chief of Air Staff and soon to replace Isitt as Chief of Air Staff, argued that even though a powerful world security organisation might be established, certain armed forces would always be needed to ensure world peace. Nevill doubted that the sporadic outbreaks which would frequently threaten peace would be dealt with by using atomic weapons. There was no reason to assume, he argued, that the basic principles of warfare and their method of application had been fundamentally altered by such developments. Therefore, "the human factor will still remain paramount and a national organisation for defence will still be required". Neville proposed a post-war air force of five regular squadrons which, with necessary ancillary organisations, would comprise about 400 officers and 3,000 airmen. There should also be, he believed, an extensive Territorial Air Force establishment. While he realised that only the major industrial powers could hope to maintain the most modern types of aircraft, Nevill argued that the RNZAF could still maintain an effective training organisation using obsolete aircraft. Furthermore, New Zealand should start discarding its current service aircraft, which were all American, and begin replacing them with British equipment again.[7]

The force envisaged by Neville would be designed to fulfil New Zealand's commitments to post-war security through the Canberra Agreement and the United Nations, or to support any overseas commitments New Zealand might undertake. Like Bettington and Jellicoe after the First World War, Nevill again urged that the centre of gravity of world power and the attendant sources of friction were moving into the Pacific Ocean, around which lived a great mass of the world's population. Once again, the only real threat to the security of the region would come from "some first-class Asiatic power". These facts, combined with the remarkable development of military and civil aviation had removed forever the comparative isolation of New Zealand. The changed status of the Pacific Ocean as a result of the war and the resurgence of national independence amongst the peoples of South-East Asia meant that Australia and New Zealand had to adopt a realistic attitude towards defence. Security would always remain "a matter for international agreement based on military

[7] Air Commodore Arthur Nevill, "Paper on the Post War Air Force", 23 November 1945, pp. 1, 18. See also Isitt to Minister of Defence "Policy and Staffing in Relation to Demobilisation and Post War

power", but within this international framework the British Commonwealth had to find a special place. Neither Australia nor New Zealand was capable, separately or jointly, of ensuring the defence of the region. Therefore, the two nations should maintain their initial commitments to the defence of their home bases and then give their full support, firstly, to imperial defence, and secondly, to the United Nations.[8]

According to Nevill, New Zealand's defence policy should be based primarily on a contribution to imperial strategy, the success of which would determine the ultimate fate of the country. The security of sea communications, especially in the Pacific, would also be vital to the protection of New Zealand trade and the operation of imperial forces. Finally, some attention should be paid to the defence of New Zealand itself. In the solution of all these problems, especially the continued security of the Pacific zone, the role of the air force would be crucial. The mobility of air forces, the topography of New Zealand and the Pacific region and the nature of overseas commitments that New Zealand appeared likely to undertake, such as the defence of island bases, all favoured the preparation, maintenance, and use of regular air force units.[9]

The cosy club around which the rapidly expanding RNZAF was formed.
(Squadron Leader Bob Spurdle, 1986)

Although the air force, and New Zealand defence thinking generally, seemed to have completely returned to pre-war precedents, the government still believed that the soundest way of assessing New Zealand's capacity to develop future air forces was through a critical examination of the evolution and performance of the RNZAF during the war. New Zealand's air contribution had fallen into two distinct categories; the supply of personnel to the RAF, and the provision of squadrons for the Pacific. For the first two years of the war, practically the entire effort of the RNZAF in New Zealand had been devoted to the training of aircrew for the RAF. Because developing the Empire Air Training Scheme in New Zealand necessitated a heavy works programme, a large training organisation and the importation of training aircraft, the system did not reach its maximum output until about March 1942. By this time,

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Air Force", 10 April 1945, both in NANZ EA W2619 87/4/10 part 1.
[8] "Paper on the Post War Air Force", pp. 2-5.
[9] ibid., pp. 5-8.

aircrew were being sent overseas at the rate of approximately 4,000 per year. Under the scheme New Zealand made available over 13,000 trained and semi-trained aircrew for service with the RAF and the scheme necessitated the retention within New Zealand of approximately 10,000 other personnel for the duration of the war. According to Nevill, although the dispatch of trained aircrew to the RAF in this way represented the most effective contribution to the war New Zealand could make, the development of the air force suffered and became "unbalanced".[10]

The entry of Japan into the war completely altered the situation with the result that, while training for the RAF was continued, an increasing number of aircrew was steadily diverted into the South Pacific and the RNZAF took on heavy additional commitments. A 20 squadron development plan was approved by the New Zealand war cabinet and agreed to by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but the difficulty in obtaining aircraft, and the time involved in forming the necessary home establishment, meant that a strength of 18 squadrons was not reached until August 1944. The maximum strength reached in the Pacific was about 8,500, but this had required an additional training and maintenance force in New Zealand of approximately 12,000. The air force had learnt that its capacity to expand in wartime was dependent on the size and efficiency of the regular air force in peace time, and the maximum number of squadrons that could be raised and maintained in wartime was estimated to be about 25. Moreover, it now took at least 12 months of continuous instruction to train personnel to the minimum standard necessary for operational employment in modern air warfare.[11]

When New Zealand's air commitment is considered alongside its global commitments on land and at sea in every war theatre, the record is remarkable. With a population of only 1.6 million people, less than many American cities at that time, New Zealand's mobilisation reached a peak in September 1942 with 157,000 in the armed services (including 3,413 women): this represented half the male population aged between 18 and 45, with over 70,000 men serving overseas by November 1943.

[10] ibid., pp. 8-10.
[11] ibid.

New Zealand casualties were also the highest per capita of any Commonwealth country.[12]

Also generally recognised is the fact that New Zealand's decision to leave its largest national fighting force in the Middle East, even when the country appeared in very real danger of direct attack, was based on sound and carefully considered strategic principles. Keith Sinclair, a New Zealand historian, argued that although the overall strategy proved sound in the long run, in retrospect it appears incredible that New Zealand would leave its most experienced and efficient forces in Europe and the Middle East while there seemed such a grave danger in the Pacific. Furthermore, Sinclair found it "difficult to believe that, had Fraser and Nash been New Zealanders, they could have accepted this policy".[13] Without wondering whether or not Fraser and Nash considered themselves New Zealanders simply because they were not born in the country, there were other arguments that ultimately proved conclusive. As well as the obvious tactical and logistic difficulties of returning 2 Division, the defence of New Zealand still depended on the security of Great Britain and the Commonwealth as a whole, and Germany remained the principle and most dangerous enemy. Furthermore, it was generally thought that victory over Japan would take much longer than it did, leaving time for New Zealand to reassemble its forces for the Pacific after the defeat of Germany.

Frederick Wood saw the Pacific War as a crucial stage in New Zealand's search for a political balance between Asia and Europe. Over the years New Zealanders had learned to include an increasing element of Pacific consciousness into their lives, especially under the tuition of the Japanese and Americans, and this, he suggested, might be a fair index to the country's national maturity.[14] Both the New Zealand official war histories that deal extensively with the Pacific agree that in the eyes of the world the Pacific campaigns were largely overshadowed by events elsewhere. However, Ross continues that "it may be that posterity will see a greater

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[12] *AJHR* 1945, H-11A, "Report of the National Service Department", pp. 16, 122. For other air force statistics see also the *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1946, especially pp. 176-181.
[13] Sinclair, p. 236.
[14] Wood, p. 191.

significance than we do now in this, the defeat of the first attempt by a major Asian maritime power to extend its sphere of domination southward".[15]

New Zealand participation in the Pacific War might have signalled the awakening of interest in the area and a realisation that New Zealand was not, in fact, situated off the south coast of England. This was not generally the case, however, and, except for a brief period at the beginning of the Pacific conflict, New Zealand interest remained, and in many cases still remains, focused on the European war. This was further exacerbated at the time by New Zealand's National Broadcasting Service which, rather than satisfying listeners' demands for prompt and reliable news and frank discussion, allowed itself to sink into "timid dullness". In addition, New Zealand relied almost wholly on the BBC for international news and comment, and this was rarely tailored to New Zealand needs. News programmes largely concentrated on events in Europe and the Middle East and were compiled by British and even Americans who stood "mentally with their backs to the Pacific". Only exceptional events in the Pacific received much attention and, for reasons of geography and national experience, this remained the case even though nearly 15,000 RNZAF personnel served in the Pacific theatre, along with considerable New Zealand army and navy contributions.[16]

As a result of this, what has not been well considered is whether New Zealand's Pacific effort, especially its air force commitment - its largest, most costly, and sustained effort in that theatre - was necessary, well executed, beneficial, or even appropriate. Indeed the Pacific remains relatively neglected historically even though the Asia-Pacific region is now widely accepted as the most vital area for the prosperity and defence of New Zealand. Part of the problem is the nature of the Pacific theatre itself. From the pilots' point of view, the Battle of Britain had been an endurance test and they were compelled to return to the air again and again on the

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[15] Ross, *Royal New Zealand Air Force*, p. vii; and Gillespie, p. 325.

[16] B. Angus, "Public Opinion in New Zealand Towards Japan 1939-1945", New Zealand War History Narrative, NANZ WAII 21 19a/CN37, pp. 71, 90-91. This is confirmed by B. K. Gordon, *New Zealand Becomes a Pacific Power*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp. 184-186. For exact figures on RNZAF personnel, casualties, awards and operational statistics, see "Report of the Air Department for the Year 1945-1946" in 1946 *AJHR* H-37, pp. 5-6, 14-18. For the army see Gillespie, *The Pacific,* and for New Zealand naval operations in the Pacific see S. D. Waters, *The Royal New Zealand Navy: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45,* Wellington, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1956.

same day. However, if a pilot survived being shot down over Britain there was a good chance of being in action again the next day. Even over the continent, there was a chance of being smuggled out by sympathetic people. In the Pacific, bailing out usually meant over a jungle of tall trees, dense undergrowth, poisonous plants or animals. Although the Japanese seldom endeared themselves to the isolated local communities of the Pacific, occasionally indigenous peoples were unfriendly. Bailing out over the sea at least raised the possibility of Catalina rescue, but also of sharks and dehydration and sun.[17] With vast areas of ocean and what little land there was covered by mountainous forest there were few safe places to set down an aircraft or bale-out in an emergency. Pacific pilots carried handgun, knife, water, Mae West (life jacket) including whistle, sea dye marker, shark repellent plus jungle-pack including silk maps, compass, signalling mirror, fishing gear, survival booklet (guide to poisonous plants and animals), first aid equipment, water-purifying tablets, jungle-knife for slashing through jungle, plus a parachute and inflatable dinghy pack so that they looked "more like an overloaded coal delivery man than a handsome fighter".[18]

Errol Martyn, a New Zealand air force historian, rightly points out that New Zealand casualties in RAF Bomber Command during the six months from July to December 1942 were higher than all wartime RNZAF deaths in the Pacific.[19] Yet, as one Pacific airman recalled, young New Zealand servicemen "had no local village pub to pop into for a social hour or so, no quick trip up to London for entertainment, and no girl-friends closer than 2,000 odd miles away." The official history of the United States Army Air Force agrees that "the greatest single factor affecting morale within the South Pacific air units lay in the duration of time spent in isolation on the islands ... there could be no Saturday nights in the villages, as in England, France, or Italy."[20] Rather than the familiar place-names of England and Europe, Pacific geography was unfamiliar and unrecognisable. Living conditions were often extremely unpleasant and it was sometimes hard for Pacific servicemen to comprehend how much life was continuing on as normal in New Zealand with shopping, race meetings, and business

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[17] K. Mulligan, *Kittyhawks and Coconuts*, Otaki, New Zealand Wings, 1995, p. 59.
[18] A. Horn, *Wings Over the Pacific: The RNZAF in the Pacific War,* Auckland, Random Century, 1992, p. 150.
[19] E. W. Martyn, *For Your Tomorrow: A Record of New Zealanders Who Have Died While Serving with the RNZAF and Allied Air Services Since 1915, Volume I: Fates 1915-1942*, Christchurch, Volplane Press, 1998, p. 168.

as usual.[21] The end of the war in Europe, for example, was received in the Pacific with mixed emotions. There was naturally a pleasure that Germany had been beaten, but also a great sense of having been forgotten and left behind. The rest of the world celebrated, but work went on as usual in the Pacific.[22] Indeed, the rate of sexually transmitted disease amongst RNZAF personnel in the Pacific was always considerably lower than the average in New Zealand and even some other theatres.

Between May 1943 and September 1945, 967 RNZAF personnel were repatriated from the Pacific for medical reasons. Of these, 801 were ground-staff and 166 were aircrew, possibly reflecting the different nature of the two jobs and the longer tour of duty served by ground-crew. Malaria was a major military problem during the first period of Allied occupation in the area. From July to December 1943, the first period for which figures are available for the RNZAF, one man in ten was going down with malaria. By the end of the war in the Pacific, this rate had dropped to about one in 100, but the establishment of new bases often led to increased rates of sickness such as at New Georgia where there was a high rate of malaria, and at Espiritu Santo where there were 440 cases of the mosquito-borne dengue fever in the first few months.[23]

More men were non-effective and more time was lost because of skin diseases than from any other type of disease. About one third of all medical admissions were because of various skin diseases, a reflection on the tropical Pacific climate. From January to August 1945, for example, there were over 1,000 RNZAF cases in the area. Of these, 100 were in hospital for more than three weeks before returning to duty, while 79 men had to be repatriated. During the same period there were only 49 cases of malaria, of which four were in hospital longer than three weeks while six were repatriated. Other conditions such as injuries and infections, especially ear infections, also caused loss of effectiveness. Ironically, the incidence of respiratory-tract

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[20] Horn, p. 63; Craven & Cate, Volume IV, pp. 273-275.
[21] For example Cox, p. 138.
[22] Holmes, p. 81.
[23] Wigram 83/207.50 "The Health of the RNZAF in the Pacific 1943-1945: A General Survey", compiled by Sgt. C. F. Wrigley for the Principal Medical Officer, New Zealand Air Task Force, Pacific Area, 15 September 1945. See also Wigram 83/207.50 History of RNZAF Medical Services 1939-1945.

infections, measles, mumps, bronchitis and asthma were, because of the lack of winter in the tropics, much lower than in New Zealand.[24]

Frederick Jones, New Zealand's Minister of Defence, warned Prime Minister Peter Fraser from the Middle East that there was a general desire amongst 2 Division to return home, but no desire to serve in the Solomon Islands. "While I feel sure", Jones continued, "they would be prepared to serve where required, still I am convinced that if given the option the majority would prefer this theatre of war where health conditions generally are certainly considerably superior."[25] Fraser took this notice very seriously, but was most anxious that there should be no feeling in Australia or the United States that New Zealand was shirking, or leaving them to serve in the tropics. As he explained to Churchill, his government realised that if New Zealand left its main forces in the Middle East, Australia would

> undoubtedly regard New Zealand's action as one of reluctance not only to assist to the fullest extent of our resources, in the Pacific battle, in which the dangers to both our countries are so close, but also to take our share in the burden arising from tropical disease which takes so grim and heavy a toll among those serving in the forward areas.[26]

Jones warned Fraser that New Zealand airmen in Britain were not keen to return to the RNZAF in New Zealand or the Pacific, and Goddard told Isitt that hardly any of the New Zealanders serving with the RAF in Asia wanted to return either.[27] Isitt also admitted that a number of men who had come back from England had found neither interesting jobs nor the advancement to which they considered themselves entitled. This was, he felt, because of the success of American operations in the South Pacific. If things had gone badly, "aircraft would have been made available to us here more rapidly, more squadrons would have been formed and these boys would have found themselves in positions of great responsibility". As it was, however, "they have left an immense organisation ... and all the excitement of strange countries and of

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[24] ibid.

[25] Jones quoted in Fraser to Berendsen, 22 May 1943, Kay, Vol. I, pp. 31-35 and Taylor, Volume II, pp. 716-717.

[26] Fraser to Churchill, 21 May 1943, Kay, Vol. I, pp. 29-30.

[27] Jones to Fraser, 4 June 1943, NANZ EA1 59/2/214 and Goddard to Isitt, 21 September 1943, NANZ Air 100/7.

active service for a much smaller sphere and a much smaller organisation which is considerably limited in its scope and equipment".[28]

There was even ill-feeling between those who had served in the Pacific and those returning from Europe. Squadron Leader Bob Spurdle remembered receiving a hostile reception back in New Zealand at the beginning of January 1943 after action in the RAF in Europe. The explanation he felt was that "returning operational types represented a threat to the cosy club around which the rapidly expanding RNZAF was formed ... now battle-experienced men were returning and the home-types felt threatened."[29] One of New Zealand's most distinguished pilots, Wing Commander Johnny Checketts attributed the problem to a lack of energy and imagination within the Air Department in developing and explaining its post-war policy. Upon returning from service in Europe, Checketts was disturbed to find an unpleasant tension in the RNZAF between the so-called Europeans and Pacifics. The Europeans were thought to be "British orientated, looking to the Royal Air Force for ideas and equipment", whereas the Pacifics were supposedly "American-minded, preferring the ideas and equipment of the United States Air Force". In Checketts' opinion, both points of view had much to commend them, but were not openly debated, and instead the European-Pacific tension was allowed to degenerate into personal rivalries.[30]

None of us has any hatred of the German people.

(Michael Joseph Savage, September 1939)

A vital consideration in the Pacific War was the nature of the conflict between the Allies and Japan. Declaring war on Germany in September 1939, Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage stressed that:

> None of us has any hatred of the German people. For the old culture of the Germans, their songs, their poetry and their music, we have nothing but admiration and affection. We believe that there are millions of German people who want to live in peace and quietness as we do, threatening no one and seeking to dominate no one.... [However] Nazism is militant and insatiable paganism. In its short but terrible

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[28] Isitt to Mrs. White of Wanganui, 26 April 1943, NANZ Air 100/7.

[29] B. Spurdle, *The Blue Arena*, London, William Kimber, 1986, pp. 138-139. See also Cox, pp. 132-133.

[30] V. Orange, *The Road to Biggin Hill: A Life of Wing Commander Johnny Checketts*, Wellington, Mallinson Rendel, 1987, p. 155.

> history it has caused incalculable suffering. If permitted to continue, it will spread misery and desolation throughout the world. ... To destroy it, but not the great nation which it has so cruelly cheated, is the task of those who have taken up arms against Nazism.[31]

It would be extremely difficult to find any similar statement about the Japanese anywhere before the end of the war. While a survey of New Zealand public opinion shows little interest in Japan and Japanese affairs before the war, in a report on the New Zealand army in May 1939, Major-General Pierse Mackesy, a senior British officer, urged: "My mind revolts at the thought of another war, but far more does my soul revolt ... at the thought of people of my own race in New Zealand trifling with the possibility, whether remote or not, of finding themselves at the mercy of Mongoloid savages of the North Pacific."[32] Admiral Halsey was famous for his colourful rhetoric, and even privately told Nimitz that "when we start rolling the Yellow Sons of Bitches back, I'll denude everything and throw it at 'em ... We are still rarin' to go and get some more 'Monkey-meat'. My ambition remains to populate Hell with yellow bastards."[33] Throughout the United States and the Commonwealth, the Japanese were seen as cunning, atrocious, fanatic, and inhuman, while the Japanese attacked the Allies as flabby, decadent, and hypocritical in their preaching of democracy as they exploited their non-European empires. Ancient racial stereotypes were exacerbated by the savage nature of much of the fighting in the Pacific so that, even long after the outcome of the war was no longer in doubt, "the natural response ... was an obsession with extermination on both sides - a war without mercy".[34]

As Spurdle observed, this was a completely different kind of warfare:

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[31] McIntyre and Gardner, *Speeches and Documents on New Zealand History*, pp. 365-366.
[32] Angus, pp. 1-3. See also M. P. Lissington, *New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941*, Wellington, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1972. Mackesy cited in McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, p. 232.
[33] Halsey to Nimitz, 11 January 1943 and 25 March 1943, United States Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Halsey Collection, Box 15.
[34] J. D. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, London, Faber and Faber, 1986, pp. ix-x, 9-11. On post-war implications see S. Dockrill "The Legacy of the Pacific War as seen from Europe" in S. Dockrill (ed.) *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima: The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific , 1941-45*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994, pp. 215-224. An important discussion of many aspects of the Pacific War is L. Allen "The Campaigns in Asia and the Pacific" in *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, March 1990, especially pp. 177-180, 183-184.

> in Europe a downed flier would in all probability be picked up, interrogated and be put in the bag, out here your fate was likely to be decapitation by some bow-legged monkey with a samurai sword. In Europe and the Middle East defeated troops, showing the white flag, were taken prisoner and incarcerated. Here in the steaming jungle the Japanese fought fanatically and had to be virtually exterminated.[35]

"We were all well aware of the consequences of capture by the Japanese", remembered another New Zealand pilot. "It was something to be avoided at all costs.... Some of our pilots died in tragic circumstances and at least one of our friends was executed. Malnutrition, Beri-Beri, starvation, experimentation, beatings and torture were the norm and the wounded died of neglect".[36] Japanese treatment of prisoners of war often left a lot to be desired and even official orders reflected this in their instructions to New Zealand personnel:

> In Europe, the Germans, who after all, have years of military tradition behind them respect this attitude and, generally speaking, the prisoner who maintains [silence] does not suffer in consequence. ... [but] we are dealing with the semi-civilised Jap ... if he wants you to talk he won't be over scrupulous in persuading you to do so.[37]

New Zealand pilots were instructed to perform the unpleasant tasks often thought unacceptable in Europe - or at least in the West, as German chivalry did not extend to the Slavs on the Eastern Front - such as strafing Japanese soldiers in the water or airmen using parachutes: "If they are over their own territory and bail out, shoot them too, otherwise they will live to fight again and might shoot you down next time."[38]

In view of the evil reputation the Japanese were to gain for themselves during the Second World War, it is interesting to note that during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, their treatment of prisoners had been regarded as exemplary. Foreign observers attached to the two sides remarked on the high standard of medical services and hygiene, as well as a scrupulous regard for international conventions. According to historians Guy Wint and John Pritchard:

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[35] Spurdle, p. 154.
[36] Mulligan, p. 59.
[37] Flight Lieutenant Zimmerman "Far East Notes on Evasion", RNZAF Archives 87/331.19g Zimmerman Papers, pp. 1-2, 13.
[38] "Suggestions for Fighter Squadron Formations", RNZAF Archives 27/23/3.

> Given the ferocity of the fighting, the inhospitable climate, and the appalling loses suffered by both sides, Japan went to extraordinary lengths in caring for the wounded and ill, and for captives for whom it was responsible. Japanese and western observers alike comprehended that there was a considerable difference between the humane and civilised conduct of the Japanese and that of other peoples.[39]

During the First World War, with the Royal Navy concentrated in home waters, the protection of British imperial interests in East Asia had depended upon support from Japan. Indeed, the Japanese Navy escorted Australian and New Zealand forces to the Mediterranean and even served there.

By 1941, however, the Allies were relatively ignorant of Japan's capabilities. Despite the large number of western military, naval and air attachés in Japan, the Japanese were still widely believed to be short-sighted copycats of little real intelligence. The argument that they made poor pilots because they all wore glasses and suffered from vertigo was just one of many based on prejudice rather than observation. These myths were propagated even in the face of evidence to the contrary provided in China and Korea long before Pearl Harbor, and were to have a disastrous effect as the Japanese swept all before them during the first months of the Pacific War. The famous Japanese "Zero" fighter, for example, made its first appearance in China early in 1939.[40]

If the Japanese appeared invincible to Allied soldiers in the early months of the war, they also convinced themselves that they were invincible. As early as 1940, however, the United States had broken Japan's highest diplomatic code and continued to read it throughout the war. Not only did this give the United States important information on Japanese policy, but also many details on developments in Germany and Europe as they were reported by Japanese diplomats and officials. Despite some hints, the Japanese stubbornly refused to believe that the Allies could possibly have broken into their codes. The American navy would be greatly aided at Midway by its partial reading of Japanese naval codes and from then on would be able to use these codes to direct submarines against Japanese shipping. The United States Army in the Pacific did not make such efficient use of its signals intelligence and was slower in breaking the Japanese army codes but, thanks to captured code-books, these too were

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[39] Calvocoressi pp. 626-627.

eventually broken and used in later campaigns. Clearly the use of signals intelligence had a great impact on the Allied conduct of the war in all theatres, yet there is little evidence to suggest that New Zealand political leaders, or New Zealand commanders of forces in the Pacific, were made aware of these developments except in the vaguest terms. Many decisions affecting operations in which the RNZAF participated were made based on ULTRA intelligence, but information on the nature of the intelligence itself was severely restricted for obvious reasons.[41]

How successful, then, was New Zealand's first experience of working closely with the United States as opposed to its traditional ally, Great Britain? The fall of Singapore caused New Zealand to look more seriously towards the United States than it had ever done before, but this remained a cautious move. New Zealand established diplomatic and political contact with the United States, and participated within the command systems of the South Pacific and later South-West Pacific Areas, but the pre-war resistance to American dominance in the Pacific remained throughout and even after the war. New Zealand seldom made such unequivocal statements of support as the Australian Prime Minister John Curtin's famous claim that "Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom".[42]

It was continually emphasised that New Zealand must play its part in the Pacific war to increase the strength of the "British" voice in the post-war negotiations that it was presumed would follow the defeat of Japan. Fraser reminded Churchill that New Zealand was "fully aware of the necessity for maintaining the British element in the United Nations' forces in the Pacific to the greatest strength possible ... This Dominion is, of course, the only country from which British forces can at present be made available for service in the South Pacific Area."[43] As the American Chargé

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[40] ibid., pp. 1168-1169.

[41] G. L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 552-554. On the signals war see for example R. Lewin, *The American Magic: Codes, Ciphers and the Defeat of Japan*, New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982, which suggests that Sigint and other intelligence was the deciding factor in the Solomon Islands (p. 174), and J. Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II*, New York, Random House, 1995, which discusses briefly whether New Zealand was included or not (p. 343). See also E. J. Drea, *MacArthur's Ultra: Codebreaking and the War Against Japan, 1942-1945*, Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 1992.

[42] cited in P. Dennis (et al.) *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 193.

[43] Fraser to Churchill, 14 May 1943, *Documents*, Vol. II, pp. 202-203.

d'Affairs, Raymond E. Cox, commented to Cordell Hull early in the war, "the more the United States is impelled to back Britain and the Empire in the war ... the warmer will be the sentiment of this Dominion towards it." This sentiment was also due, he felt, to the "somewhat faint but growing realisation that the future of New Zealand may depend more than hitherto had been imagined - or desired - on the United States and its course of action in the Pacific".[44]

The retiring British High Commissioner to New Zealand, Sir Harry Batterbee, warned London in June 1945 that

> if we do not make it plain by both deeds and words that Britain still leads the world, there is the danger that New Zealand may eventually feel in too great a degree the increasing attraction of the United States as a great and progressive world Power, democratic and English-speaking like New Zealand herself, with, she may feel, perhaps a greater stake in the Pacific even than the United Kingdom ... The Americans occupy a place closer to the hearts of the New Zealanders than before. Nor do the United States authorities lose any effort to improve their advantage by propaganda, some of it injudicious, but much of it subtle and effective.

Clearly Britain did not still "lead the world" as Batterbee optimistically suggested, yet London was also aware that New Zealand and even Australian feelings were cooling towards the United States and warming towards Britain as early as 1943. This was attributed to the high-handedness of some American command, especially that of General MacArthur, and to the perceived threat of American commercial and military interest in the post-war Pacific.[45]

The British flag should fly in the Far East as dominantly and as early as possible.
(Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, May 1944)

Throughout the war, New Zealand's main army and air contributions remained in the Middle East and European theatres. On several occasions, especially towards the end of the war, the RNZAF in the Pacific looked towards Britain for better opportunities, whether they be under South-East Asia Command, with the Royal Navy, or with the Australians, and plans were being made when the war ended for

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[44] "Political Report for Period April-May 1941", Raymond E. Cox to United States Secretary of State, 27 May 1941, NARA RG 59 Box 5115, pp. 8-10.
[45] C. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 364-367, 645-647.

service with a British Commonwealth force against Japan itself. The end of the war saw New Zealand once again concentrating on trade and defence ties with Britain. New Zealand and Australia agreed that the British themselves should take part in the Pacific and even Curtin emphasised how welcome this would be. Australians, he stressed had never lost their "deep sense of oneness" with Britain and this relationship had not been affected by the events of 1942. The Empire was a "civilising agent" and the "British flag should fly in the Far East as dominantly and as early as possibly". But the Pacific was an American theatre, and any British action would be dependent on United States support. In the end, as John McCarthy, an Australian historian observed, "rarely, if ever, has so much planning brought about so little a result as the efforts made by Britain to orchestrate its entry into the Pacific war."[46]

Relations between the United States and New Zealand remained friendly at all levels and the United States supplied the aircraft and materials needed to enable New Zealand's air contribution to the Pacific. After the war, Isitt stated that he had "no complaint at all" about the treatment and support he had received from Admiral Nimitz and all the American commanders in the Pacific. Generally he had found the Americans, and especially Admiral Halsey, very pleasant and easy to work with: "they were always most obliging and would shift any United States officer who did not seem willing to co-operate fully. The few differences that did arise came from unthinking New Zealand servicemen rather than Americans." The only exception was Admiral King and this was due to the Canberra Pact. Isitt felt King had seen the pact as anti-American and since then had taken "a most objectionable attitude to Australian and New Zealand forces in the Pacific". Halsey had expressed many times to Isitt his admiration for the New Zealand and other British forces in the Pacific and Isitt believed he was genuine in his praise as were many other Americans.[47] As Colonel William Stevens, Administration Officer for 2 Division, wrote from the Middle East: "what I can say, albeit regretfully, is that we all find how well and how easily we get on with American officers compared with the English. I am a loyal Britisher and I

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[46] J. McCarthy "The Curtin Government, Britain and Borneo" in Wahlert, *Australian Army Amphibious Operations*, pp. 21-23.

[47] Isitt to Kippenberger, 7 November 1947, NANZ Air 118/81n, appendix IIIk, and interview with J. T. Henderson, December 1969.

have tried to fight against this feeling, but there is no use denying that we find them very easy of approach and very cordial in response."[48]

Even General Barrowclough felt that on the whole relations with the Americans had been excellent despite their different ways of doing things. The experience of Barrowclough's division in the Pacific had been even more disappointing than that of the RNZAF and, naturally enough, he remained convinced that New Zealand should have disbanded 2 Division in favour of a completely Pacific contribution. Barrowclough felt that the real reason this had not been done was because of General Freyberg's personal influence with Winston Churchill. Barrowclough was convinced that Halsey had been "particularly anxious" for 3 Division to be brought up to full strength and was most disappointed that it was not, especially as a two brigade force was not interchangeable with a full American division for operations. However, others in New Zealand felt that the Americans had little interest in New Zealand's Pacific commitment except for food production, and the duties that would have continued to have been assigned, such as the garrisoning of secured or by-passed islands, would have involved the fragmentation and disappointing use of a force of any size.[49]

Of course there were misunderstandings such as Squadron Leader Heath's complaint that New Zealanders thought the United States was "a large departmental store with shelves upon shelves stocked with any item of equipment which they may need and that supplies should be able to be despatched within a few hours".[50] Colonel William Pharazyn, who served as New Zealand military attaché and liaison officer in Washington, felt that the unofficial job description of the Foreign Liaison Section of the Pentagon was "keeping the Allies off our necks" and they were very efficient at their job. Although they were always obliging, and full of dinner and cocktail party invitations, they had strict instructions not to give up any information of importance.[51]

Occasionally American officials would hint that New Zealand, and especially its labour unions, were not doing everything they could for the war effort, or that the

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[48] Stevens to McIntosh, 4 April 1943, MFAT STE 1/43/005.
[49] Major-General Harold Barrowclough, Brigadier Albert Conway, and Sir Bernard Carl Ashwin, interviews with J. T. Henderson November 1969 and March 1970.
[50] Squadron Leader E. C. O. Heath to Isitt, 6 January 1943, NANZ Air 100/5.
[51] Colonel William Pharazyn interview with J. T. Henderson, March 1970. Also interesting is Henderson's interview with Sir Carl Berendsen, January 1970.

country might be better off producing vegetables rather than more servicemen. Admiral Calhoun, for example, gravely embarrassed the government in June 1945 when he announced with the best of intentions that "the most important thing New Zealand could do now to help in the Pacific was to assist in the feeding of American troops".[52] If overall relations between New Zealand and the United States were not necessarily familiar, nevertheless they remained friendly throughout the war. Indeed one of New Zealand's official histories bestows the ultimate compliment when it concludes that "New Zealand components of all three services worked under senior American command with an understanding as complete as with people of the Commonwealth itself".[53]

At the start of the South Pacific offensive, the United States was desperate for aircraft and pilots, and the RNZAF played a small but vital role, especially the early Hudson squadrons. Goddard was keen for the RNZAF to take an active role, and the New Zealanders had a genuine reputation as excellent airmen, but the government still feared Japanese attack, or perhaps it feared the electorate's apprehension of attack. The government resisted denuding New Zealand of modern aircraft and squadrons, especially as the real reason for these squadrons being established in the first place was the defence of New Zealand and then, only secondly, for service in the Pacific. There was a fear in New Zealand not only of leaving the country open to invasion, but of walking into a "second Crete" in the Pacific. Despite the urging of Goddard and later Isitt, it is quite possible that the United States was aware through other channels that New Zealand was reluctant to place its forces in a position where they would receive heavy casualties. Berendsen, for example, argued that "we need not, in view of our heavy casualties ... take a shock troop role."[54]

Halsey was assured that New Zealand considered itself "capable of training air and ground personnel up to 30 squadrons for service in the South Pacific and would prefer to employ them in that area rather than continue to send them overseas to European and African theatres".[55] Goddard was keen to build up the RNZAF in the Pacific, but realised that if equipment and encouragement were not received from the

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[52] Admiral Calhoun cited in Wood, p. 299. See also Fraser to Churchill, 14 July 1945, *Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 489-490.
[53] Gillespie, p. 322.
[54] Berendsen to McIntosh, 9 November 1944, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, pp. 83-84.

United States: "plans for expansion ... must be abandoned and we must revert to the Empire Air Training Plan for sending out all our surplus trained personnel to Europe".[56] Goddard insisted that trained aircrew in Europe and Africa were all "subject to recall to New Zealand for service in the South Pacific Area", yet it was soon recognised that there was very little enthusiasm amongst servicemen for this.[57] Furthermore, at the same time Goddard was saying the RNZAF wanted to expand, Fraser asked Halsey to consider the manpower problems New Zealand was experiencing in providing forces for the Pacific as well as increasing food production.[58] Naturally enough, New Zealand never completely handed over control of its air force and there was a feeling amongst the American command that units might be withheld by the government when they were needed. As the New Zealand official historians note wryly: "the least effective way of arriving at a quick decision involving the use of New Zealand troops was to consult the New Zealand Government. It was certainly not the method to be adopted in an emergency."[59]

At the same time, American commanders did not want RNZAF squadrons to be established and supplied aircraft at the expense of American squadrons anyway. As Ronald Spector, an American historian of the Pacific War, points out, "many of the debates about strategy within the councils of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and between the Americans and British were, in essence, debates about the allocation of resources".[60] The Canberra Agreement is also usually blamed for New Zealand (and Australian) forces being left behind in the South-West Pacific rather than moving forward into the Central Pacific. Clearly, the agreement was a factor in American decision-making after 1944, yet it is also clear that some American commanders assumed very early in the war for various reasons, including American prestige and the apparent reluctance of the New Zealand government, that New Zealand army and air forces would be employed in garrison or light combat roles. Nimitz informed Ghormley in July 1942

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[55] Nimitz Command Summary, 14 November 1942, Book Two, p. 984.
[56] CAS to New Zealand Air Mission Washington, 25 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[57] RNZAF: Proposals for Development for Participation in South Pacific War Operations, 9 October 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[58] Fraser to Halsey via United States Naval Attaché Captain James P. Olding, 31 October 1942, NANZ EA 1 59/2/12.
[59] NANZ Air 118/81f pp. 15-16.
[60] R. H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, New York, Random House, 1985, p. xiii.

that the United States Army had no intention of providing garrison troops from the United States for the Guadalcanal area and he was authorised to investigate "the use of New Zealand troops for garrison forces in advanced positions".[61]

As early as November 1942, Walter Nash already had the feeling that the Americans had no real desire to expand and utilise the RNZAF to immediate advantage, and the result would be that both the RNZAF and the New Zealand Army would be relegated to the equivalent of forward garrison duty. Nash was convinced that with some minor exceptions, the general disposition in Washington was to confine active service in the Pacific to members of the United States forces.[62] Despite the disappointment and frustration of many in the RNZAF, there were indications that the Americans were none too anxious to have Commonwealth forces serving with them as the Pacific fighting moved northwards. They feared exactly what New Zealand and Australia hoped for: "that participation in the fighting would give the Dominions a claim to a voice in policy-making."[63]

Expansion plans continued, but by mid-1944 Isitt was reminding Halsey that he and Fraser were agreed that an active role for the air force was "essential ... for the prestige of New Zealand", and there would be "no strings on where they may be employed so long as there [was] something for them to fight". Isitt instructed his officials in Washington to speak off the record to the Americans and to the British there "with a view to finding us an active role somewhere". New Zealand, he said, would prefer to be employed in the Pacific with the United States Navy, but failing that would go "anywhere we can find some fighting." The only theatre Isitt hoped not to go to was the South-West Pacific where the Australians were already becoming dissatisfied with their allotted role.[64]

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[61] Nimitz Command Summary, Book One, pp. 618-619, 642 and War Diary of the Commander South Pacific Area, 15 July 1942.
[62] NZ Air Mission Washington to AHQ Wellington, 30 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1; and Nash to Fraser, 29 November 1942, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2 vol. 1.
[63] Wood, p. 289.
[64] Isitt to Vice-Admiral R. B. Carney, 11 April 1944; and Isitt to Mitchell, 15 April 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

New Zealand's fear of being swamped by Australia and of losing her national identity.

(Thomas D'Alton, July 1944)

Perhaps New Zealand would have been better to concentrate on producing meat, vegetables and dairy goods for Britain and for American forces in the Pacific. New Zealand constantly stressed the over-riding importance of its manpower problems, seeking guidance as to where the need was greatest and how New Zealand could best serve. Moreover, many believed, like McIntosh, that the air force had become a "Frankenstein".[65] Certainly Isitt was well aware of the pressure being placed on Wellington from Britain and the United States to increase food production and continually had to defend the role of the RNZAF against calls that it was too large and involved in non-essential work. As he admitted to General Kenney, there were several matters hinging on the RNZAF's future employment, in particular aircraft and personnel requirements, and there was always "the over-riding political viewpoint to which I am very close and which it is my job to lead, if I can, along the lines which we consider the best in the interests of the war." However, it seems unlikely that Isitt really was able to lead the government as he optimistically suggests. The New Zealand government was fully committed to fighting the war, but unless Isitt could show them that the RNZAF would be getting back into the major fighting, they were "inclined to be influenced by the requests they are getting from Washington and London for food and material, and the tendency [was] to get men back into production."[66]

The manpower debate was a major factor in all New Zealand's wartime decisions from very early on in the war and many argued that more men in the services did not necessarily equal a greater real contribution to the overall Allied war effort. New Zealand entered the war with 19,000 men on the unemployment benefit or in subsidised work and in the early days the withdrawal of men volunteering - and after October 1940, being conscripted - for military service could be replaced relatively easily. By the end of 1941, however, after two years at war, the cumulative

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[65] For example, Nash wrote to President Roosevelt on 24 January 1944: " It is not possible with our existing resources of men and women to maintain the strength of our present forces.... Where is the need greatest? ... How can New Zealand best serve?" *Documents,* Vol. II, pp. 331-334. Also McIntosh to Stevens 14 May 1943, McIntosh Papers, MFAT, STE 1/43/006.

[66] Isitt to Kenney, 16 October 1944 and 28 December 1944, NANZ Air 100/9.

withdrawal of approximately 30 per cent of the male workforce had exhausted unused labour reserves. It was becoming increasingly difficult to replace men recruited for the armed forces or to divert further manpower and resources to war production. The start of the Pacific War led to an increase of 40,000 extra men in the armed forces, but this could not be sustained for long. As the demand for foodstuffs and other farm products from the United Kingdom and both New Zealand and American forces in the Pacific became ever greater, reinforcements could no longer be sent and 3 Division was brought back to New Zealand.[67]

Perhaps New Zealand might have been better advised to leave the Pacific conflict to the Americans and concentrate completely on providing forces for Europe and the Middle East. Yet the argument was just as strong that the Pacific was "our area" and in order to gain a voice in Pacific affairs after the war, New Zealand had to earn it. This would be done by taking an active role in the actual fighting rather than just by growing cabbages and providing fishing and other recreation for American forces, or even by sending men to Europe. As Wood commented about the European war, "public sentiment and the adventurousness of youth" meant that Peter Fraser's remark that New Zealand might better serve the war effort by maintaining farm production rather than providing fighting men was "out of key with the times".[68] New Zealand wanted to take part in the conflict against Japan even after the situation was taken safely in hand by the United States. National pride alone necessitated some participation and in addition to 3 Division and the Royal New Zealand Navy, the RNZAF's role in the South and South-West Pacific was a recognisably national contribution to the Allied effort against Japan.

Most important was the need for New Zealand to show a "British" flag during these campaigns, but there was also continued criticism from Australia that New Zealand was not pulling its weight in the defence of the region. The decision to send United States Marines to New Zealand largely served to offset fears of Japanese attack early in the war, but New Zealand's decision to leave 2 Division in the Middle East rather than withdraw it to the Pacific drew sharp criticism from Australia. Relations

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[67] J. V. T. Baker, *The New Zealand People at War, War Economy: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45*, Wellington, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1965, pp. 56, 86, 191-193.
[68] Wood, pp. 11, 93-98.

between Australians and New Zealanders generally remained friendly, but the relationship between Wellington and Canberra was strained for some time. Indeed, Goddard was concerned that Kenney and Dr. Evatt were seeking to reduce allocations of aircraft to New Zealand in favour of Australia on the grounds that New Zealand's allotment was "disproportionate" and that the risks were greater in the South-West Pacific. Fraser felt the need to emphasise the role that New Zealand forces, especially its air force, were taking in the Pacific, and the signing of the Canberra Pact in 1944 was seen as a renewed recognition of the two countries' common interests.[69]

When the Australian High Commissioner, Thomas D'Alton, discussed the New Zealand situation with Evatt, he stressed that New Zealand was never as closely threatened as Australia and the Japanese victories had not brought the same kind of feelings of isolation in the Pacific. New Zealand interest in the war was still focused on events in Europe, and the Pacific fighting was receiving little prominence. Therefore, considerations of defence and security which had favoured the tightening of bonds between the two countries were "likely to be given less weight as the war proceeds". Furthermore, there were several factors to be kept in mind. "Firstly", D'Alton warned Evatt, "there is New Zealand's fear of being swamped by the Commonwealth [of Australia] and of losing her national identity". Secondly, there was New Zealand's prevailing sentiment of attachment to the United Kingdom. Britain was still New Zealand's best customer and supplier, and still regarded as home. One Australian historian has observed that Churchill never ceased to treat Australia and New Zealand as colonies as he had done as Colonial Secretary before the First World War and "New Zealand's deference to Whitehall only encouraged him in his Victorian ways". The best thing Australia could do, D'Alton felt, was to emphasise the shared security concerns of the two countries and "the sympathy and common interests existing between the members of the Labour Governments of our two lands".[70]

New Zealand's experience of the Pacific war was substantially different from Australia's both in the degree of threat and the extent of involvement. David Horner, for example, is one Australian historian who has referred to the 12 months after Pearl

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[69] ibid., p. 284, and Goddard to Seabrook, 17 March 1943, NANZ Air 1 130/10/2-2.

Harbor as "a turning point in Australian history". Others have described the fall of Singapore as "Australia's Dunkirk" which marked the "birthplace of Australian independence" even more so than the battlefields of Gallipoli.[71] New Zealanders rarely thought (or think) in this way about these events. Moreover, while there may have been disappointment that New Zealand never had the degree of influence with the United States that it did through Commonwealth channels with Britain, this appears to have been largely accepted or even expected by New Zealand. The United States was a benevolent Goliath, but a giant nonetheless. Because of the relatively small size of New Zealand's contribution to the huge American war effort, and the Dominion's major effort in the Middle East and Europe, New Zealand largely accepted complete American dominance of the Pacific War.

Of course, New Zealand considered itself, along with Australia, to have a vital interest in the South Pacific, and to represent the British Commonwealth in the area.[72] New Zealand also expected to be closely consulted about the use of its own forces in the area, and the drawing up of formal means of doing this seemed to drag on indefinitely, yet this was quite different from the Australian situation. For some time Australian forces were in the majority in the South-West Pacific and Australia might well have expected more influence than it felt it achieved. Despite the Allies' Germany-first policy, by the end of 1942 there were greater American army and naval (and naval air) forces committed to the Pacific than to the European and Mediterranean theatres. Yet, as late as October 1943, Australian land forces available in the Pacific amounted to 492,000 compared to American land forces of 198,000. Although the United States had greater naval forces and a larger number of combat squadrons, Australian air strength was still greater than American.[73] Obviously, New Zealand did not have to deal closely with the personality of General MacArthur until quite late in the war either, and the RNZAF did not suffer from the RAAF's divided

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[70] D'Alton to Evatt, 28 July 1944, Australian Archives A989 1943/735/167 "Australian - New Zealand Relations"; Day, *Reluctant Nation*, p. 101.

[71] David Horner, James Morrison and Gregory Pemperton in D. Horner (ed.) *The Battles That Shaped Australia: "The Australian's" Anniversary Essays*, St. Leonards, N.S.W., Allen and Unwin, 1994, pp. xiii, 84, 120.

[72] One concise examination is P. Lowe "Britain, the Commonwealth and Pacific Security" in Dockrill, pp. 174-187.

[73] R. Spector "Pacific War" in I. C. B. Dear and M. R. D. Foot (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 855-863.

leadership. For the same reasons, however, with the exception of the actual personnel involved, New Zealand disappointment at being stranded in the South and South-West Pacific was generally less acute than Australia's too.[74]

Given these factors, and New Zealand's apparent reluctance to take on a role that would result in heavy casualties, the use of the air force in the Pacific theatre would seem to have been the ideal employment of the nation's armed forces for the achievement of strategic benefits. It was ironic and extremely disappointing to have put so much national effort into developing the RNZAF's Pacific capability at a time when the country was straining under the weight of its war effort, and then for the air force to be unwanted and unneeded once its development was complete. On the other hand, if events in the Pacific had gone differently, a greater participation might well have been necessary. Although impossible to admit at the time, being "stranded" in South and South-West Pacific Areas suited New Zealand's purposes admirably. RNZAF squadrons in the Pacific were entirely equipped by the United States under Lend-Lease to gain a valuable apprenticeship in tropical island warfare. New Zealand squadrons were able to support 3 Division operations when 14 Brigade cleared Vella Lavella of Japanese in September and October 1943, when 8 Brigade landed in the Treasury Islands (Mono) in October and November 1943, and when 14 Brigade captured Green Island (Nissan) in February 1944.[75] Where their role was known, they gained the country an excellent reputation through their work with American and later Australian forces, and New Zealand was seen to be taking an active part in the war against Japan in its own region.

Furthermore, the nature of air power, especially in the South Pacific Area after mid-1944, was such that casualties were likely to be kept to a minimum and conditions likely to be less uncomfortable than an equal effort by 3 Division or similar army units for example. The majority of servicemen were involved either in the home establishment or in depots and support bases some distance from more dangerous action. While any active service in a tropical zone is arduous enough, and conditions

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[74] On MacArthur and the Australians see for example D. Horner, *High Command: Australia's Struggle for an Independent War Strategy, 1939-1945*, St. Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1992. On the Jones-Bostock scandal in the RAAF, A. Stephens *Power Plus Attitude: Ideas, Strategy and Doctrine in the Royal Australian Air Force 1921-1991*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992, pp. 62-68.

[75] Gillespie, pp. 252-257.

throughout the area were far from luxurious, life on an air base remained rather different from the life army units fighting in the jungle experienced at the same time. Plenty of time would remain for these relationships to be strengthened in ANZUS and SEATO and for this experience to be tested and proved with Britain, Australia and the United States in the Cold War battles for South-East Asia.

Appendices:

A. Directive to the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area

4 April 1942

1. By agreement among the governments of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States, the Pacific Theatre is designated an area of United States strategic responsibility.

2. The Pacific Ocean Area, comprising the North, Central and South Pacific Areas, has been constituted as defined in Annex 1. You are designated as the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area, and of all armed forces which the governments concerned have assigned, or may assign, to this area.

3. You will appoint a commander of the South Pacific Area, who, acting under your authority and general direction, will exercise command of the combined armed forces which may at any time be assigned that area. You will exercise direct command of the combined armed forces in the North and Central Pacific Areas.

4. In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the governments concerned your operations will be designed to accomplish the following:

a. Hold the island positions between the United States and the South-West Pacific Area necessary for the security of the line of communications between those regions; and for supporting naval, air, and amphibious operations against Japanese forces.

b. Support the operations of the forces in the South-West Pacific Area.

c. Contain Japanese forces within the Pacific Theatre.

d. Support the defence of the continent of North America.

e. Protect the essential sea and air communications.

f. Prepare for the execution of major amphibious offensives against positions held by Japan, the initial offensives to be launched from the South Pacific and South-West Pacific Area.

5. You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under your command. You are authorised to direct the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

6. You are authorised to control the issue of all communiques concerning the forces under your command.

7. When forces of your command operate outside the Pacific Ocean Area, co-ordination with forces assigned to the area in which operating will be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.

8. Commanders of all armed forces within your Area will be immediately informed by their respective governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective governments.

9. Your staff will include officers assigned by the governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to the national commanders of the various forces in your Area.

10. The governments concerned will exercise direction of operations in the Pacific Ocean Area as follows:

a. The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war material.

b. The Joint United States Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, will act as the Executive Agency for the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you will be issued by or through him.

c. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff will be responsible for the land defence of New Zealand, subject to such strategic decisions affecting this responsibility as may be made by you for the conduct of naval operations in the Pacific Ocean Area.

(NANZ Air 1 130/4/1)

B. Directive to the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area - Amplification of

25 August 1942

1. Paragraph 10c of the Directive to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area is modified as follows:-

a. Strike out paragraph 10c, and substitute:-

1. In the exercise of command over armed forces which the New Zealand Government has assigned, or may assign, for the local defence of New Zealand, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff will be the agency through which such local command is exercised.

2. In the exercise of command the "Principles of Command" as set forth in paragraph 14 of ABC-1 are applicable.

3. With regard to the possible movement of New Zealand forces out of New Zealand territory, the following by the United States Chiefs of Staff to the President is self-explanatory:

> Proposals of the United States Chiefs of Staff (for operations in the Pacific Ocean Area) made to the President as United States Commander in Chief are subject to review by him from the standpoint of higher political considerations and to reference by him to the Pacific War Council in Washington when necessary. The interests of the nations whose forces or whose land possessions may be involved in these military operations are further safeguarded by the power each nation retains to refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable.

(NANZ Air 1 130/4/1)

C. Excerpt from ABC-1 Principles of Command

14. Subject to the provisions of Annexes II and III, and to other agreements made between appropriate authorities to meet special conditions, the following principles will govern the exercise of command of the Military forces of the Associated Powers:

a. In accordance with plans based on joint strategic policy, each Power will be charged with the strategic direction of all forces of the Associated Powers normally operating in certain areas. These areas are defined initially in Annex II.

b. As a general rule, the forces of each of the Associated Powers should operate under their own commanders in the areas of responsibility of their own Power.

c. The assignment of an area to one Power shall not be construed as restricting the forces of the other Power from temporarily extending appropriate operations into that area, as may be required by particular circumstances.

d. The forces of either Power which are employed normally under the strategic direction of an established commander of the other, will, with due regard to their type, be employed as task (organised) forces charged with the execution of specific strategic tasks. These task (organised) forces will operate under their own commanders and will not be distributed into small bodies attached to the forces of the other Power. Only exceptional Military circumstances will justify the temporary suspension of the normal strategic tasks.

e. When units of both Powers co-operate tactically, command will be exercised by that officer of either Power who is the senior in rank, or if of equal rank, of time in grade.

f. United States naval aviation forces employed in British Areas will operate under United States naval command, and will remain an integral part of United States naval task forces. Arrangements will be made for co-ordination of their operations with those of the appropriate Coastal Command groups.

(NANZ 1 130/4/1)

D. Excerpt from Notes on Conference at Palmyra

25 September 1942

Present: *Admiral Nimitz, Admiral McCain, Colonel (M.C.) Maas, Colonel Pfeiffer, Captain Ofstie.*
Admiral Nimitz:
I would like to have your ideas on the employment of Goddard's outfit.
Admiral McCain:
I think it should be a homogeneous outfit capable of operating about 12 B-17s; 27 VFs; and 18 VSBs.
Admiral Nimitz:
To wait for that would deprive us of their present services.
Admiral McCain:
Their Hudsons are valuable. I have asked for 12 Hudsons to be sent to BUTTON. From there, six at a time will be sent to CACTUS to operate. The New Zealanders will do everything in connection with operation and maintenance of those 12 Hudsons.
Admiral Nimitz:
Yes; but we still would not be getting maximum use of people who can be very useful.
Admiral McCain:
But I don't think they can furnish any more planes now. There are only 40 left in New Zealand and the government, who would have to pass on the question of more leaving New Zealand, would probably refuse.
Admiral Nimitz:
But I understand they have personnel for 14 squadrons right now. Can't we use some of that personnel right now.
Admiral McCain:
I never thought of it in just that way but I think you have a good idea there and should put it to Fitch.
Admiral Nimitz:
Shall we feed their personnel right into our squadrons?
Admiral McCain:
I should say "yes".
Colonel Maas:
I saw it work well down in Australia between the Army and the Australians.
Admiral Nimitz:
We will promise the New Zealanders to organise their own squadrons when planes are available. By getting our training and indoctrination now, they will be ready for immediate employment when they form their own squadrons. What should I look into down there?
Admiral McCain:
The first thing is to get as many reserve planes up to BUTTON as you can. CACTUS can't handle any more planes right now but you have to be ready to feed them in all the time. Aviation gasoline supply at CACTUS is the present most critical question.
Admiral Nimitz:
Where should the naval air supply depot be?
Admiral McCain:
At Auckland, of course, you have everything but it is pretty far away. At Noumea port conditions are bad but it is much closer to where spares are needed. You should go into the question of the location of the depot when you are down there. [...]

Admiral Nimitz:
How about New Guinea?
Colonel Maas:
I am afraid it is gone. The Australians won't allow Americans to go in. Curtin is in a political jam. He pulled all the Australians out of the Middle East because he said they were necessary for the defence of Australia. New Zealand, on the other hand, has left some of her troops in the Middle East. It is now a big political question and Curtin won't let the Americans do anything in New Guinea because of the political effect it might have. General MacArthur does not control even the American troops. General Blamey is in command of them. MacArthur is only an adviser to the War Council. He has no independent authority. The Australians won't fight. This war has been a series of withdrawals for them. They now have the habit.... The sons of the Australians of the last war have all the bad habits of their fathers but none of the good qualities. They just don't want to fight and won't. I have a suggestion. All the islands other than Hawaii and New Zealand should be put in a new Naval district and administered as such. We should go into every place we now hold with the idea that we are going to stay. We are building places in Australia and New Zealand that we have to pay for. Right now I think we probably owe Australia money for the buildings and airfields we are using to defend them. The American people will never stand for what we are doing now, and then after the war to have to turn over the facilities we bought and paid for in those countries and to give them cash besides. We should hold what we have and what we will get. This is especially true of New Caledonia which right now is the key to our position in the South Pacific and which is rich enough to pay for the whole war. We ought to put things where we can hold them and not where we will have to turn them over to somebody else.
Admiral Nimitz:
We have been thinking of organisation down there and that is one of the matters to be discussed. You know, however, that Midway, Johnston, and Palmyra are now in the 14th Naval District and we are not considering them.
Colonel Maas:
When I said except Hawaii and New Zealand, I meant everything south of the equator. I mean this new naval district should have everything we now hold south of the equator, except New Zealand.
Admiral Nimitz:
We want to put in a big base that will provide everything we need. What goes into that base now we expect to use. Auckland appears too far back.
Colonel Maas:
Especially if New Guinea goes, Auckland will be too far back. Curtin would rather lose New Guinea than lose the election. I talked to MacArthur about it and probably Admiral [Herbert F.] Leary has already told you about it. To me the stopping of Japanese infiltration into CACTUS is the most important thing in the whole area.

(King Papers, United States Navy History Center)

E. Directive by Commander South Pacific to the Commander Royal New Zealand Air Force

7 July 1943

1. Pursuant to the Directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of April 1942, as amended September, 1942, the Royal New Zealand Air Force, together with other military forces of the Dominion within the South Pacific Area, is considered as under the command of and subject to the orders of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force. With respect to the forces engaged in the local defence of New Zealand this command is exercised through the agency of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff; with respect to the forces stationed elsewhere in the area, through the direct chain of military command applicable to the several localities or task forces.

2. The Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, is subject to the policies and directions established by the Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force.

3. Operational command of New Zealand Air Forces assigned to locations outside the New Zealand area, and within the South Pacific Area, rests with local commanders, under appropriate and established seniors, subject to the policy and directives formulated by the Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force.

4. Operational command of New Zealand Air Forces assigned to the New Zealand area will be as established by Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, subject to the approval of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.

5. In the defence of New Zealand the Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, will co-ordinate the operations of all land-based Allied planes operating in the New Zealand Area, and operate under the direct operational command of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, or under such command as may have been regularly established. The foregoing is subject to such adjustment as may, in the opinion of the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, be necessitated by changes in the general strategic situation.

6. The Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, will be responsible for the operational control of any United States Squadrons which may be based in New Zealand for purpose other than the defence of New Zealand. The training and administration of such units will be the responsibility of the local United States Commanders.

7. The Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Forces, will co-ordinate all air movements into and out of New Zealand so as to insure economy of effort, simplicity of administration and communications and safety. Except in case of urgent military necessity, aircraft of the United States Army and Navy Transport Systems will not be diverted nor schedules changed without approval by Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force. Any such diversions will be promptly reported.

8. The Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, will consult the Commanding General, South Pacific Area, and the Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, as appropriate, in regard to the operational training of Royal New Zealand Air Force units. Continuity of training of Royal New Zealand Air Forces outside the New Zealand Area, to ensure battle efficiency, will be conducted in accordance with policies and directives of Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, and subject to such supervision as he deems necessary.

9. Supply of aircraft and aeronautical material to the Royal New Zealand Air Force will be made in accordance with existing and future agreements of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Requests for supplies and material from United States sources, other than airplanes and maintenance supplies for units serving in the forward areas, will be submitted through Commander Fleet Aircraft South, or Commanding General, Service of Supply, South Pacific Area, as appropriate.

10. The Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, will communicate directly with the Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, with regard to Royal New Zealand Air Force units in the South Pacific Area. The Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force, may consult directly with the Commanding General, South Pacific Area, regarding such matters as are authorised by Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, or higher authority.

11. The Commander, No. 1 (Islands) Group, Royal New Zealand Air Force, will be regarded as the senior representative in the forward area of the Commander, Royal New Zealand Air Force. The latter will, upon request, assign representatives to the Headquarters or the Commander, Fleet Aircraft South, and the Commanding General, Service of Supply, South Pacific Area.

(NANZ Air 1 130/4/7)

F. Excerpt from Australian - New Zealand Agreement

21 January 1944

Definition of Objectives of Australian - New Zealand Co-operation

1. The two Governments agree that, as a preliminary, provision shall be made for fuller exchange of information regarding both the views of each Government and the facts in the possession of either bearing on matters of common interest.
2. The two Governments give mutual assurances that, on matters which appear to be of common concern, each Government will, so far as possible, be acquainted with the mind of the other before views are expressed elsewhere by either.
3. In furtherance of the above provisions with respect to exchange of views and information, the two Governments agree that there shall be the maximum degree of unity in the presentation, elsewhere, of the views of the two countries.
4. The two Governments agree to adopt an expeditious and continuous means of consultation by which each will obtain directly the opinions of the other.
5. The two Governments agree to act together in matters of common concern in the South-West and South Pacific areas.
6. So far as compatible with the existence of separate military commands, the two Governments agree to co-ordinate their efforts for the purpose of prosecuting the war to a successful conclusion.

Armistice and Subsequent Arrangements

7. The two Governments declare that they have vital interests in all preparations for any armistice ending the present hostilities or any part thereof and also in arrangements subsequent to any such armistice, and agree that their interests should be protected by representation at the highest level on all armistice planning and executive bodies.
8. The two Governments are in agreement that the final peace settlement should be made in respect of all our enemies after hostilities with all of them are concluded.
9. Subject to the last two preceding clauses, the two Governments will seek agreement with each other on the terms of any armistice to be concluded.
10. The two Governments declare that they should actively participate in any armistice commission to be set up.

Security and Defence

13. The two Governments agree that, within the framework of a general system of world security, a regional zone of defence comprising the South-West and South Pacific areas shall be established and that this zone should be based on Australia and New Zealand, stretching through the arc of islands north and north-east of Australia, to Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.
14. The two Governments regard it as a matter of cardinal importance that they should both be associated, not only in the membership, but also in the planning and establishment, of the general international organisation referred to in the Moscow Declaration of October, 1943, which organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace loving states and open to membership by all such states, large or small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.
15. Pending the re-establishment of law and order and the inauguration of a system of general security, the two Governments hereby declare their vital interest in the action on behalf of the community of nations contemplated in Article 5 of the Moscow Declaration of October, 1943. For that purpose it is agreed that it would be proper for Australia and New Zealand to assume full responsibility for policing or sharing in policing such areas in the South-West and South Pacific as may from time to time be agreed upon.
16. The two Governments accept as a recognised principle of international practice that the construction and use, in time of war by any power of naval, military, or air installations, in any territory under the sovereignty or control of another power, does not, in itself, afford any basis for territorial claims or rights of sovereignty or control after the conclusion of hostilities.

Civil Aviation

17. The two Governments agree that the regulation of all air transport services should be subject to the terms of a convention which will supersede the Convention relating to the Regulation of Aerial Navigation.

18. The two Governments declare that the air services using the international air trunk routes should be operated by an international air transport authority.
22. In the event of failure to obtain a satisfactory international agreement to establish and govern the use of international air trunk routes, the two Governments will support a system of air trunk routes controlled and operated by Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations under government ownership

Dependencies and Territories
26. The two Governments declare that the interim administration and ultimate disposal of enemy territories in the Pacific are of vital importance to Australia and New Zealand, and that any such disposal should be effected only with their agreement and as part of a general Pacific settlement.
27. The two Governments declare that no change in the sovereignty or system of control of any of the islands of the Pacific should be effected except as a result of an agreement to which they are parties or in terms of which they have both concurred.

International Conference Relating to the South West and South Pacific
34. The two Governments agree that, as soon as possible, there should be a frank exchange of views on the problems of security, post-war development, and native welfare between properly accredited representatives of the Governments with existing territorial interests in the South-West Pacific area or in the South Pacific area, or in both, namely, in addition to the two Governments, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the Government of the United States of America, the Government of the Netherlands, the French Committee of National Liberation and the Government of Portugal, and his Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia should take the necessary steps to call a conference of the Governments concerned.

(New Zealand Foreign Policy Statements and Documents 1943-1957)

G. RNZAF Personnel in the Pacific 1940-1945

Date	Groundstaff	Aircrew	Total
1940			
December	-	-	77
1941			
March	-	-	87
October	-	-	140
1942			
March	-	-	575
June	-	-	758
September	-	-	1,241
1943			
January	-	-	2,366
June	2,488	279	2,767
September	3,269	398	3,667
1944			
January	4,577	531	5,108
July	5,622	768	6,390
December	6,937	961	7,898
1945			
June	7,412	960(est.)	8,372
August	7,012	720	7,732

(RNZAF Manpower Narrative, NANZ Air 118/81m)

H. RNZAF Personnel in Europe and the Pacific

Distribution of RNZAF Personnel

	New Zealand	Pacific	Attached to RAF & RCAF	Total
March 1940	3,875	1	112	3,988
March 1941	8,431	87	2,019	10,597
March 1942	11,980	575	4,688	17,243
March 1943	25,590	2,640	5,366	33,566
March 1944	28,466	5,921	7,027	41,414
March 1945	22,813	8,568	4,746	36,127
March 1946	5,852	721	581	7,154

(*AJHR* 1946, H-37)

I. New Zealanders Serving in the Armed Forces 1939-1946

New Zealand's Armed Forces

	Total*	Overseas	% of Military-age men	% of Male Workforce
1939				
September	2,570	463	-	0.5
November	4,081	669	-	1
1940				
February	12,339	7,649	-	2
August	43,253	15,392	4	8
1941				
February	70,705	33,583	24	14
August	75,755	43,274		15
1942				
February	125,391	48,846	42	24
August	157,000	50,000		30
1943				
February	146,953	60,523	47	27
August	140,975	68,493		26
1944				
February	126,102	69,246	40	23
August	110,578	55,710		20
1945				
February	97,047	55,500	31	18
August	89,320	51,889		16
1946				
February	26,499	8,052	8	5

*including women

(*AJHR* 1946 H-11A)

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- 105/3/3 New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Meetings
- 105/3/6 Chiefs of Staff Committee Papers
- 113/3/2 Procurement of United States Equipment
- 127/20/8 RNZAF Operations Against Rabaul
- 130/3/2 Plans: Co-ordination of Australian and New Zealand Forces in Pacific
- 130/4/1 Plans Pacific: Organisation of higher direction
- 130/4/4 Plans Pacific: Transfer of RNZAF to Pacific Command
- 130/4/5 Plans: Pacific Area: Organisation and Directives
- 130/4/7 Plans: Directives to AOC RNZAF 1942-1943
- 130/4/8 Plans: Pacific Area: Combined Chiefs of Staff Papers
- 130/8/4 Plans: Liaison with United States Air Forces
- 130/8/7 Plans: Liaison with United States Air Forces
- 130/10/2 Plans: Expansion Programme 1942-1943
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- 130/30/1 Plans: Employment of RNZAF in South-West Pacific Area
- 130/31/1 Plans: Employment of RNZAF with Royal Navy in Pacific
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- 3 Air Ministry Officials and AOC RNZAF Headquarters, London
- 4 Officers Commanding RNZAF Groups
- 5 Air Force Member of New Zealand Joint Staff Mission, Washington
- 7 Director of Operations
- 9 United States Army and Air Force Officers
- 10 New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Representative in South Pacific Area
- 11 New Zealand Liaison Office, Melbourne
- 13 Miscellaneous

Air Series 118 (Air Historical Branch)

- 22 RNZAF Operations in the Solomons Offensive
- 32 Works and Supply in the Forward Area
- 40 No. 1 (Islands) Group
- 47 RNZAF Fighter Wing Ondonga
- 52 RNZAF Station Espiritu Santo
- 81f The Defence of the Pacific 1942
- 81m Manpower in the RNZAF
- 81n The Manpower Situation in 1944/1945

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- 106/7 Organisation Memoranda (DOSD)
- 120/190 The Reduction of Rabaul
- 149/1 14 Squadron Operations Record Book
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- 203/1 Green Island Field Headquarters Operations Record Book

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